

ROUGH RIDERS

THIS VERSION:
BY JOHN MILIUS
5 AUGUST, 1996

BLACK SCREEN

TITLE: NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND
JUNE 2, 1897

Slowly the screen lightens--an image appears--a MAN, in a frock coat, tailored well, and over 180 pounds of hardened vigorous muscle. The bright blue eyes squint at us. Behind the prince-nez spectacles, he has a high brow, stiff hair that is parted high and clipped unflatteringly short. He stands at ease, though leaning forward in an aggressive manner. He is waiting, a small lectern at his side. He stares at us, a hard look difficult to gage. One is reminded of the look of gunfighters like Hickcock or Hardin. But this man is, of course, Theodore Roosevelt, Undersecretary of the Navy. Someday he will be the twenty-sixth President of the United States, and by all accounts, one of its greatest. Roosevelt stirs, as if some signal has brought him to action.

ROOSEVELT

The time has arrived for this great nation of ours to step out upon the world stage. So let the spotlight fall on us! I am reminded today of the words of George Washington, who said "To be prepared for war is the most effectual means to promote peace." We ask for a great Navy because no national life is worth having if we are not willing to defend it.

CLOSE--ROOSEVELT--The eyes moving--the head thrusting forward on a bull neck.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

All of the great masterful races have been fighting races! Lose the fighting virtues and lose the right to stand at all--There are higher things in life than the soft enjoyment of material comfort. It is through strife or the readiness for strife that a nation or a man must win greatness.

Roosevelt's fist slams into his hand.

FULL SHOT--ROOSEVELT--He lets this sink in--goes on more calmly, with certitude.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

No triumph of peace is so great as the supreme triumph of war! And it is my opinion that war with Spain--is becoming

more inevitable by the hour.

LONG SHOT--

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

So let the world know that we here are
willing to pour out our blood, our treasure,
our tears--that America is ready--and if
need be--desirous--of battle.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN--A TROPICAL NIGHT--Moonlight falls upon a port city--
lights sparkle--music and the scent of gardenias drift across
the water.

HAVANA HARBOR, FEBRUARY 4, 1898 21.40 HOURS

In the distance, a gray shape of a battleship, lit up at
anchor.

U.S. BATTLESHIP MAINE--

A minute of peace, and then the Maine is split by a massive
internal explosion. The light comes first, then the sound
echoes across the water. After that, it is strangely silent.

CUT TO:

NIGHT--NEW YORK CITY--A glossy black coach pulls up in front
of a splendid townhouse. Several men in overcoats wait
impatiently for it to stop--the coach door is opened.

MAN

You Mr. Hearst?

VOICE (O.S.)

What is it?

MAN

An urgent dispatch Sir.

Out of the coach steps WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST in a dramatic
fur trimmed cape, carrying an engraved silver cane. Hearst
is tall, imperious, flagrant with power. He holds his hand
out to assist a beautiful woman.

HEARST

At this time of night man. Let me
see it.

He takes the paper--steps towards the gaslight. His
expression goes from shock, to surprise, to sublime
satisfaction--

HEARST
This--this means war!

CUT TO:

STAGE COACH WHEEL--Spinning at high speed--churning up dust.

TITLE: ARIZONA TERRITORY APRIL 11, 1898

PAN UP THE COACH--Passengers staring out in panic. The shotgun guard fires his second barrel at:

THREE RIDERS--Hurtling along to intercept the coach. They fire rifles from full gallop--once--twice.

SHOTGUN GUARD--Breaks open his weapon--drops it at his feet, raises his hands.

RIDERS--Overtake the stage--turning the lead horses.

LONG SHOT--A vast, majestic sage covered plateau. The drama is small and insignificant as the stage is stopped by the riders.

OUTLAW--Masked, wearing Mexican finery, sitting on a fine horse, his rifle over his saddle bow. Another Outlaw is on the far side. The Third is in front with a rifle leveled. The strong box crashes to the ground.

OUTLAW
Now the sacks--should be three.

The sacks thump into the dirt jingling.

DRIVER
It ain't my money--Say, you darn near hit me back there.

OUTLAW
Was just trying to scare you. Sorry.

He moves close to the passengers--eyes a WOMAN.

OUTLAW (CONT'D)
Let me see your hands Ma'am.

She shows him.

OUTLAW (CONT'D)
No rings? Surely a fine lady like yourself is married.

She shakes her head.

OUTLAW (CONT'D)
My compadre will have to search
you like the Spaniards searched
the Cuban lady. You read the
papers don't you?

WOMAN
You wouldn't dare.

OUTLAW
He would.

OTHER OUTLAW
That's right Ma'am.

She reaches into her cleavage.

OUTLAW
That's a fine watch you have Mister.

The man hands it over, as does the Woman a ruby ring.

WOMAN
You're a scurvy knave. You'll
get what you deserve.

OUTLAW
Yes Ma'am--I hope I do. Is that
a journal?

The man gives him the newspaper.

OTHER OUTLAW
Thank you all for your cooperation--

OUTLAW
Tell the posse in Bisbee to leave
the married men at home and be well
mounted.

THIRD OUTLAW
Vamos!

He fires his rifle and the horses pull ahead--the dust
clears--the Head Outlaw pulls off his mask--a handsome
knavish face, a rake hellion with a good heart--HENRY NASH.
His partners smash the box open and take the packaged bills
marked Copper Queen Mining. They are GEORGE NEVILLE and BILL
IRVINE--like Nash, young cowboys looking for a stake.

NASH
Look here!

He shows them the newspaper--the glaring headline--

"WAR DECLARED".

NEVILLE

War!

IRVINE

Who cares, we got the money. Let's
get kicking!

They mount and ride.

CUT TO:

NIGHT--KNICKERBOCKER CLUB--The New York elite dine--the young members of the Brethren of the Cigar Society are smoking in the lounge. HAMILTON FISH, large, muscular and stern, has his hand upon a large world globe.

FISH

Teddy's forming a regiment I understand.
He's asking for Western types--cowboys,
Indian fighters, mountain men.

WOODBURY KANE, older, suave, more worldly, but no less aristocratic, smiles.

KANE

And you'd think he could find good examples of American manhood right here, in the Knickerbocker Club.

FISH

Don't you? Look Kane, it is the duty of the patrician class, the responsibility--to influence history by the sword.

KANE

It's not the Fourteenth Century.
There are no fields of Agincourt in Cuba.

FISH

Now how do you know?

WILLIAM TIFFANY, another fine blooded young swell, leans forward.

TIFFANY

There is malaria in Cuba, yellow fever, dysentery--

CRAIG WADSWORTH, softer than the others, tips his cigar.

WADSWORTH
Henry the Fifth died of dysentery
at 36, I believe.

FISH
Yes, but he was wearing the Crown
of conquered France.

WADSWORTH
That is life isn't it--to be crowned
King of France while having diarrhea.

Fish steps forward, an imposing presence.

FISH
Enough talk--all that matters is to
go. What about it Tiffany?

TIFFANY
Certainly.

FISH
Kane?

KANE
I suppose if you're going, I would
have to.

FISH
And you Craig?

Wadsworth hesitates.

FISH (CONT'D)
We'd so like to have you.

TIFFANY
Come on Craig--it could be your last
chance. Why I'll have father make a
commemorative bowl of silver and gold.
It will have our names inscribed--

WADSWORTH
And if one should not return?

FISH
The more luster to the name. "We in
it shall be remembered. We few, we
happy few, we band of brothers."

KANE
"The fewer men, the greater the
share of honor." What sort of
unit is Teddy putting together?

FISH

"If it is a sin to covet honor,
I am the most offending soul alive."
--Irregular Light Horse I believe.

WADSWORTH

Well--we should be able to do that.

Fish takes his hand, shakes it.

WADSWORTH

"Men shall think themselves accursed--
they, and hold their manhood cheap
while any speak--"

They all put their hands over each other's.

ALL

"--That fought with us upon Saint
Crispin's Day!"

CUT TO:

MEXICAN SHACK--NEW MEXICO TERRITORY--A COWBOY rides up fast,
dismounts, hens and pigs scamper out of the way. He bangs on
the door.

COWBOY

Eli! Open up Eli!

The door opens--a filthy MAN stands there, his shirt and
beard stained. Children squall and a woman is heard cursing
in Spanish.

COWBOY (CONT'D)

Want to go to war Eli?

ELI

Yep.

CUT TO:

RESTAURANT--LORDSBURG, NEW MEXICO--HENRY BARDSHAR is on a
ladder, clumsily polishing plates up on a wall in an empty
restaurant. He is a big man, rough hewn, not cut out for
this work. A WOMAN, SARA BARDSHAR, stands below, she is
small and mean.

SARA

Lie! All you do is lie. You
never tell yourself the truth.
You done nothin' but live off
me. You can't do a job of work.
This talk of patriotism is just

bunk. You don't even know what country you live in. You don't care--you just want an excuse to leave!

He looks around.

BARDSHAR

A man's got to do what he has to do Sara.

He drops a cup.

CUT TO:

HILL--ARIZONA TERRITORY--A rise in the desert, not much here, save our three desperadoes with their horses and money. A small fire cooks bacon in a pan. Neville cooks, Henry Nash glances at the paper. Bill Irvine looks off at the horizon with field glasses.

NEVILLE

Who we at war with?

NASH

Cuba, I think.

NEVILLE

Cuba--that's the stupidest thing I ever heard.

NASH

What're you lookin' at Bill?

IRVINE

Dust.

P.O.V. IRVINE--Dust on the horizon. Out of it emerges a full posse, pounding hard and steady towards us.

NASH (V.O.)

Dust? What's making it?

CLOSE IRVINE--He turns, matter of fact.

IRVINE

Posse.

NASH

Posse! They comin' this way?

IRVINE

Seems like it.

Nash leaps up--goes to his horse followed by IRVINE.

NEVILLE
Man can't even have breakfast without interference.

He takes the frying pan with him. They mount and ride.

CUT TO:

A NEWSPAPER--THE NEW YORK HERALD--A pen and ink drawing by Frederick Remington of a naked, shapely young woman being searched by swarthy mustachioed men. The caption above says, "SPANISH SEARCH WOMEN ON AMERICAN STEAMERS". Another caption below leads an article, "WOMEN STRIPPED IN PUBLIC SQUARE: WHIPPED BY GENERAL WEYLER HIMSELF"

VOICE (O.S.)
Don't you think I went too far?

The paper is lowered, Hearst sits at the table eating.

HEARST
Not far enough Frederick.

He is speaking to a large, well dressed man also eating, FREDERICK REMINGTON, himself.

HEARST (CONT'D)
What do you say Mr. Secretary?

Also at the table is JOHN HAY, Secretary of State--white haired, tall, a "character".

HAY
I say you're a scoundrel Randolph,
wholly without conscience.

He looks up at a servant--taps his plate.

HAY (CONT'D)
More beef--a naval blockade is in
the offing--Mahan and Roosevelt
worked up a war plan last year.

REMINIGTON
Theodore resigned his post to
take to the field--Should have
stayed with the Navy.

HEARST
Why?

REMINGTON

In the Army they shoot at you,
in the Navy they shoot at your
ship.

HEARST

Roosevelt would want them to
shoot at HIM.

REMINGTON

At any rate, a naval blockade is
hardly a war.

HEARST

You furnish the pictures.

He taps the paper with a loaded fork.

HEARST (CONT'D)

I'll furnish the war.

HAY

Very good Randolph.

He leans over, a lupine grin across his face.

HAY (CONT'D)

You don't really think those people
blew that boat up now, do you?

HEARST

What's it matter John. We have
us a war don't we?

HAY

Splendid little war.

CUT TO:

MORNING--ARIZONA TERRITORY--WOODED COUNTRY--The three bandits
ride along a steep wooded trail, their horses are tired.
Nash leads. He comes over a rise, and looks out across the
lower prairie with binoculars. He stops, sees something--a
speck of dust on the horizon.

NASH

I'll be damned.

NEVILLE

How could they be way over there?

NASH

Musta' cut across.

IRVINE

They got better horses than we
do! They musta' rid all night.

NEVILLE

Why they wanna' catch US so bad?

NASH

Yeah, even with a war goin' on.
We'll cut over to Sidewinder and
steal some fresh animals.

He pulls his horse around, they follow.

NEVILLE

Country must be in a bad mood.

CUT TO:

FARM--FREDRICKSBURG, TEXAS--A small farm house, somewhat European looking, because it is German. An OLD GERMAN MAN and his little WIFE are outside saddling a mule.

WIFE (German)

But he is my baby.

MAN (German)

We live here now--this is our country--he is strong and he is an American. They will need him.

WIFE (German)

But he could be hurt.

MAN (German)

Mama, that is what happens in war.

(looks into the door)

KLAUS! Come on now.

KLAUS comes out the door. He is a simple Bavarian farm boy, except that he is six feet seven and about four feet across at the shoulders. He picks up his little Mother to a dangerous height. Both are unashamedly weeping.

KLAUS

Mama--Mama--I am homesick already!
I miss you so!

MAMA

Klaus--My little Klaus--My baby--

His arms look like faceted stone.

FATHER
Show strength boy! --Will! You
must become a man!

Klaus swings up on the mule, which is duly taxed.

CUT TO:

A BEAUTIFUL MEXICAN GIRL—Wearing nothing but a blanket. She stares at a handsome YOUNG HISPANIC MAN, who lays back in a haystack. She is quite fetching--the blue sky framing her hair and bare shoulders. They have spent the night together.

YOUNG MAN
Your love is life itself. I would rather touch your skin or smell your hair than breathe. I cannot live without the feel of your skin--I need it like water. Honor means nothing. My future is nothing if I have to live without you. I will tell my father I cannot go to war. I am not afraid to die. I am only afraid to be without you. I will stay--I do not care what he says.

CUT TO:

THE YOUNG MAN--His name is RAFAEL PRIJATES DEL CASTILLO. He is seated on a fine horse, wearing vaquero boots and a fine suit of clothes. He is in the central plaza of his father's hacienda--and the gates before him are open. His family and others, including the girl are standing at the gates. His FATHER, an old tough Grandee puts a rifle in his scabbard.

FATHER (Spanish)
With this rifle I fought the Apache!
With this sword--

A saber hangs from a saddle horn.

FATHER (CONT'D) (Spanish)
--Your grandfather and his father before him fought for General Santa Ana against the King of all the Spains. Now it is for you my son to cover the Del Castillo name again in glory-- Your family watches you--Your country watches you--God watches you!

He grabs the reins, puts them in his son's hands.

FATHER (CONT'D) (Spanish)
Don't do nothing stupid--Vamos!

Rafael rides proudly, if tentatively through the gates--looks longingly at the lovely Senorita and then out onto the open plains of New Mexico. She stands at the gate, holding a shawl around her, and watches him until he disappears.

CUT TO:

SIDEWINDER ARIZONA--A rail siding, stock pens, a station, store, little else. A train waits, the engine puffing steam. Red, white and blue bunting flap in the breeze. A man sits at a table watching horses being loaded into a freight car. Behind is a flat car, on which several young men sit with saddles and packs. Some play cards, others lay in the sun.

STOCK PENS--Empty as our three banditos come galloping up. They stop, look at the empty pens--

NEVILLE
What the hell?

They look ahead at the train--ride over. A couple of official looking OLD CODGERS come out of the station.

MAN
You looking to enlist--Got here just in time.

NASH
Why's that?

MAN
Train's about to leave.

He looks at his compadres--they look over their shoulders down the road.

NASH
We're stock buyers--What happened to all the horses?

MAN
Goin' to San Antone to the Volunteer Cavalry--Goin' to Cuba!

NASH
We been up in the high country--
What is all this war talk?

MAN
Talk--it ain't talk--now it's deeds.
I thought you boys gonna' enlist?

Neville looks back and sees: dust coming. Irvine looks around desperately.

IRVINE
How soon's that train leave?

NASH
Now wait a second--Who we at war with?

MAN
Well Spain of course.

OTHER MAN
Who the hell else--

NASH
What for?

OTHER MAN
Cuba you damned fool.

NASH
Cuba?

Now he looks--more dust.

MAN
They blew up our battleship--
The Maine.

NEVILLE
They did?

MAN
In Havana Harbor! 263 men died.

NASH
Why didn't you say so. Blew up
our battleship. We'll join.

NEVILLE
We will?

IRVINE
Yes--we will.

NASH
But we have to make amends--

MAN
Amends?

NASH
Won't take but a minute.

They gallop off.

HILL--Out of sight, under a tree. Nash digs a hole. Neville puts the sack in. Irvine watches.

IRVINE
Gettin' closer.

Nash steps out--Neville turns a flat rock over on it. They look at each other.

NASH
Boys--whatever happens, we'll meet here when it's over.

IRVINE
Amen.

NEVILLE
God willing.

They leap on their mounts.

CLOSE NASH--Signing his name to the enlistment papers. He looks over his shoulder as horsemen emerge and ride towards them from the stock pens--about fifteen--light glinting off rifle barrels. Nash walks over to the train, and is helped up on the flat car by Irvine. They sit down trying not to look at the riders who thunder up.

RIDERS--Dust clears and a TALL TOUGH LOOKING HORSEMAN steps forward.

MAN
You must be the Sheriff.

TALL MAN
I am--looks like we got here in time.

He turns, next to him are hard looking men and an attractive woman! --who is in pants, gunbelt, et al. He gets off his horse. The others all hold rifles. She gets off hers.

CLOSE NASH--Another KID looks over at him.

KID
You know who that is?

NASH
Nope.

KID
That's Bucky O'Neil, Sheriff of Prescott--He's killed over thirty five men. Surely you've heard of him?

NASH
I've never met him personally.

MAN
They're all here Sheriff.

Bucky looks them over coldly, then he turns to the Woman and takes her in his arms--he kisses her long and passionately.

KID
That's his wife.

When he stops, she has tears in her eyes. He says nothing--the men fire rifles in the air, get off their mounts and get on the train!

MAN
Good luck Bucky!
Give 'em what they deserve!
Remember the Maine!
To Hell with Spain!

KID (to Nash)
He's gonna' be our Captain.

Nash looks at Neville and Irvine--they back at him--all to where they buried the money.

BUCKY--Jumps up on the flat car--the train lurches--his Wife hands him his rifle and runs along trying to hold his hand. She falls behind. He stands up watching her recede in the distance. They watch him. Finally he turns, takes a step--looks the three outlaws up and down.

BUCKY
I'm O'Neil--Have I seen you boys someplace before?

CUT TO:

THEODORE ROOSEVELT--Looking in a mirror at his teeth as he is tying a bow tie. He and his wife EDITH are getting dressed for a dinner. They are, naturally, in their dressing room. Roosevelt is not good at the tying, and has little patience for it.

ROOSEVELT
Damn.

EDITH
I'll help you.

She is dark haired, attractive, about his age.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Thirty-nine years old and you
haven't mastered the tie--

ROOSEVELT
Let's get to the point Edith,
let's not pretend--

EDITH
Pretend--about what?

ROOSEVELT
You've made no mention of it--

EDITH
Of what?

He turns his eyes--

ROOSEVELT
Of my going off to battle.

She busily straightens his collar.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
My insurance is paid--I've been a
good father, a good husband. You
have six children to prove it, and
my finances are sound.

He turns to her.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
You have no reason to think me
irresponsible and nothing you can
say--

EDITH
Theodore--What makes you think you
know what I will say?

He is taken aback.

EDITH (CONT'D)
I want you to go.

Silence.

EDITH (CONT'D)
God help us if you don't get to.
It's your war. You've done your
best to start it. You know that.
No, I want you to go and fight and
I hope to God you get your fill of

it and then I won't have to hear
about it any longer.

Roosevelt is quite amazed. This woman, his wife, means it.

ROOSEVELT
What if I'm killed?

She buttons up her dress--pulls on her gloves.

EDITH
Oh-no--You haven't planned on that--
No, you will come back.

ROOSEVELT
Are you sure?

EDITH
Absolute certainty.

She looks in the mirror, checks HER teeth, her hair.

EDITH (CONT'D)
But if you don't--I would be devastated--
I can't imagine life itself without you.
You are a force of nature. That's what
you wanted to know isn't it?

She turns, he takes her in his arms--kisses her. She pulls back.

EDITH (CONT'D)
We'll be late--

She grabs her shawl--He looks quickly again in the mirror--
bares his teeth.

CUT TO:

RECEPTION--To some affair of State. A tall, athletic Major, LEONARD WOOD, escorts his wife LAURA. He is President McKinley's physician, and a hero of the Apache Wars. He is intercepted by Roosevelt and Edith.

ROOSEVELT
Leonard, Thank God--We must talk now!

He turns to Laura.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
Laura--you look ravishing.

He turns back to Wood--Edith knows to take Laura away.

WOOD
Congratulations Theodore.

ROOSEVELT
On what?

WOOD
I understand the War Department
has authorized your raising a
regiment.

ROOSEVELT
That's just the point--I don't know
a thing about commanding a regiment.
I don't even know whom I'm supposed
to salute.

WOOD
Superior officers.

ROOSEVELT
I've no idea of supply or organization.
I can learn--I'm a quick study but this
thing could be over while we're stumbling
around. We can't waste a minute.

WOOD
We? What are you up to Theodore?

ROOSEVELT
You must be in command. You're a
real soldier--You must take the
Colonelcy, I'll be the Lieutenant
Colonel--We'd make a good team and
you know it.

Wood stares at him.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
Come now Leonard--I'm a lot of
things, but a fool isn't one of
them. I know when to ask for help
and when to listen.

WOOD
You'd take orders from me?

Roosevelt salutes.

ROOSEVELT
Sir, gladly Sir. What do you say?
You know you're going anyway. Why
not at the head of the wildest regiment
since the Mongols rode the Steppes?

WOOD

You know you're mad?

ROOSEVELT

It doesn't seem to bother me.

Roosevelt takes his hand, he doesn't resist. A smile comes over his face like a child who's done something wrong, but plans to get away with it. They turn to see SENATOR MARK HANNA, the boss of the Republican Party. He is accompanied by his WIFE, and a young Frenchwoman, Mlle. HENRIETTE ADLER.

ROOSEVELT

Senator Hanna!

HANNA

Roosevelt--May I introduce Mademoiselle Henriette Adler, recently arrived from Paris.

ROOSEVELT

Enchante Mademoiselle.

He kisses her hand.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

Major Leonard Wood.

He is more formal--Roosevelt pushes right past her to Hanna.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

Senator--We can't waste time--Wars are won by action initiated in the first thirty days--Modern wars that is--

HANNA

There is still time for diplomacy.
There are markets that can be damaged--securities impaired.

Roosevelt thrusts his hand past Mlle. Adler, catching her corsage.

ROOSEVELT

There are those who count business and commercial success above all else--even manliness and national honor--These are--what Adams calls Economic Man--

HANNA

Roosevelt--You have the lady's flower!

Indeed, his wildly gesticulating hand has unwrapped part of her bodice.

ROOSEVELT (French)
Pardon Mademoiselle--A thousand pardons.

He does nothing to extricate himself from her--goes right back to Hanna.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
It leads to a softening of the fiber.
Are we to develop into a cultured,
refined people unable to take care of
ourselves?

Mlle. Adler tears herself free. Wood, quite enjoying the spectacle, offers his coat. Hanna's Wife offers her shawl. Roosevelt pays no attention.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
Right now we are on the verge of
producing more than we can consume--
That means your markets Senator. Well,
who by God is protecting those markets?
A bunch of self interested millionaires?
No, it is the soldier, the fighting man
who you will need--The Germans and the
Japanese--these are fighting races that
understand what I'm saying.

HANNA (to MLLE. Adler)
He goes on about the Germans and the
Japanese--it's one of his favorites.

ROOSEVELT
Who do you think is behind the Spanish?

MLLE. ADLER
Not the Japanese?

Roosevelt turns to her--she got him.

MLLE. ADLER (CONT'D)
There are powerful people in France
who think you should respond to this
situation with prudence Mr. Roosevelt.

ROOSEVELT
Those are the same ones who violated
our Monroe Doctrine in Mexico during
our Civil War.

HANNA
Roosevelt!

ROOSEVELT

Were it up to me I'll have every
European flag driven from this
continent at bayonet point!

MLLE. ADLER

Mon Dieu! I shall faint Sir!

ROOSEVELT

Go ahead--one of us will catch you.

MRS. HANNA

Mark! --He's quite mad.

HANNA

You'd have us fighting half the world
if you were President, but you're not--
McKinley is.

ROOSEVELT

McKinley has the backbone of a chocolate
eclair.

This stops them cold.

MRS. HANNA

What does your wife do with you?

MLLE. ADLER

He has a wife?

ROOSEVELT

She supports me--approves of my desire
to go to Cuba.

MLLE. ADLER

That I can understand.

Hanna takes the ladies away, harumping.

HANNA

Perhaps the Spanish will see to
their duty--

Roosevelt is quite satisfied with himself.

WOOD

If you fail Theodore--you'll have
no political future.

ROOSEVELT

Dead men seldom do--But if we succeed
Leonard--if we succeed.

CUT TO:

PRESIDENT MCKINLEY--Looking out a window, a glass of rye whiskey in his hand. He is a dignified man, but wholly bought by Roosevelt's "economic" factions. He is not happy about the war, and at this time in his life, has the backbone of a chocolate eclair. John Hay sits across from him.

MCKINLEY

--He actually believes in what he's doing. But I've seen battle John--I've seen the dead pile up. I was a sergeant at Antietam--the worst day--

HAY

Yes Mr. President--I know Sir.

He turns around.

MCKINLEY

You're patronizing me John--Whatever--Roosevelt will more than likely be killed anyway--

He drinks. A STEWARD comes in.

STEWARD

Mr. President--the honorable Joseph Wheeler.

A white haired and bearded man stands behind them in a long frock coat--he's well dressed, but a slight wildness permeates.

HAY

Sit down Congressman--Make yourself comfortable.

WHEELER

I will.

He sits in the largest chair.

HAY

The uh--Civil War ended thirty three years ago--

WHEELER

That's right.

HAY

To us in the North, that seems like an awfully long time--But we know that folks in the South--feel like it was--

well, just yesterday.

WHEELER

Uh-huh.

HAY

So we are concerned how the folks
in the South will react to war with
Spain.

Silence.

MCKINLEY

We need to send troops through the
South--to get to Florida and Cuba.

WHEELER

Uh-huh.

HAY

A lot of our best units are negro
troops--Buffalo Soldiers--9th and
10th Cavalry.

WHEELER

Yeah uh-huh.

MCKINLEY

How would people in Richmond or
Atlanta feel about that?

WHEELER

I see.

HAY

General, you were one of the greatest
cavalry officers in the Confederacy.

WHEELER

Forrest was better.

MCKINLEY

--Well, what we're getting at--
General--is if you'd be interested
in commanding the units of volunteer
cavalry?

WHEELER

I'm sixty-one years old.

HAY

Yes, but you're spry General--spry.
We could use someone from the--South--
to participate at a very high level

of command.

WHEELER

All right you need a Southerner.

MCKINLEY

Yes, we need someone famous like you,
who would rally the South, get them
behind us.

WHEELER

You got a cigar?

Hay hands him a humidor.

HAY

Havana.

WHEELER

Thank you.

He bites off the end--strikes a match on his sole.

WHEELER

You gentleman trying to snooker an
old Democrat out of my Chair on the
House Ways and Means Committee?

MCKINLEY

Well Joe--We need Democrats in this
war too.

He lights his cigar.

WHEELER

It'll have to be a real command no
bull manure. I'd have the rank of Major
General--answer only to the Corps Commander.
Whole Cavalry Command--regulars as well as
volunteers--whites, negroes whatever--
And my son just graduated West Point.
I'd need him on my staff--

He looks at them--points his cigar at the humidor.

WHEELER

You boys want a cigar?

Hay takes one--

MCKINLEY

Then it's a deal?

WHEELER

You made it--I wouldn't worry much about the South. People down there like nothin' better'n a good fight-- You know we don't celebrate the Fourth of July.

He pauses.

WHEELER (CONT'D)

Maybe after this--we will.

CUT TO:

BOX CAR--Filled with Arizona cowboys, miners, bear hunters, and our three outlaws, who sit together watching the world go by. Behind them--a card game is going, someone's cooking on a fire made on the car's floor, others are comparing knives and pistols. Bucky O'Neil stands alone, silhouetted on the other side doorway--he looks at them, then looks out.

IRVINE

I think he knows somethin'.

NASH

We ain't never done nothin' near Prescott--truth is, we ain't done enough to have such a famous man-killer even know who we are.

NEVILLE

What if you're wrong?

NASH

Then we go to Yuma--it'd be better'n Cuba.

NEVILLE

You got a plan?

NASH

Sure--we let it ride--never been to San Antone--could be possibilities-- young girls, fast horses. We can always light out. Sit back and enjoy it boys. Show your mettle--`sides it's free.

O'Neil looks around again--a stark, lonely heroic figure that gives Nash the willies.

CUT TO:

FOYER OF A FIFTH AVENUE MANSION--Hamilton Fish's MOTHER, an imposing Grande Dame, sits in a chair with a telephone. Across sits Woodbury Kane, Tiffany, and young B.F. GOODRICH. Fish stands behind his mother.

MRS. FISH

--You know when he was nine years old, I once accosted him for wearing a hat in my sunroom. He took it off and two frogs jumped out. I had them dispensed with, of course, but all Theodore could say was, "The loss to science--the loss to science."

They all chuckle--a BUTLER steps in.

BUTLER

Mr. Roosevelt is on the connection now Madame.

She picks up the phone. People spoke loudly on telephones in those days.

MRS. FISH

Theodore! As a mother I am opposed to war, but if you're going, I see no reason why you can't take Hamilton and his chums. His grandfather was Secretary of State, that should mean something--Yes I understand you'll do your best Theodore--I expect that. Thank you and give my regards to Edith. Goodbye.

She hangs up.

FISH

Mother you were extraordinary.

KANE

Bravo Mrs. Fish.

She looks up at him wistfully.

FISH

Sometimes it helps to know a big-shot.

He leans down and kisses her on the cheek. She takes his hand--looks at the others.

MRS. FISH

It seems you were boys for such a--short time.

Her eyes are teary.

CUT TO:

FIREPLACE--Burning softly in the comfortable paneled den of the Wadsworth townhouse. WADSWORTH SR. paces furiously before his son, Craig. There is nothing comfortable about him.

WADSWORTH SR.

You're a fool! How can you expect me to respect a fool?

WADSWORTH

Even young Bill Goodrich is going.

WADSWORTH SR.

Then he's a fool too--Look, I'm going to tell you the truth and you don't hear it often--Honor is a word that someone thought up to get others to stay in line. Courage--utter recklessness not much different than inebriation. Pride, well enough that it's one of the seven sins, isn't it? This manliness espoused by a deluded upstart cowboy isn't real. Being alive is real. Being wealthy and warm and well thought-of is real, it's what any man really wants if he's honest--and you have that--You just lack common sense!

WADSWORTH

You always said Woodbury Kane had common sense and he's going.

He gets up--goes to the bar.

WADSWORTH SR.

Balderdash! Where are you going?

WADSWORTH

To get a glass of--water.

WADSWORTH SR.

Take something stronger--I'd prefer the excuse that you're drunk.

He gets the water--pours it.

WADSWORTH SR. (CONT'D)

None of you know a farthing of life--
Life is hunger and anger and--dirt.

Not polo or football or boxing. Your grandfather knew life and he didn't recommend it--That's why we're rich.

Craig sits down, leans forward. His father sits opposite him.

WADSWORTH
Didn't you ever want to know, Father?

WADSWORTH SR. (softer)
No, and I thank God every day for it.
I'm a rich man's son and so are you
and isn't that enough? You're not
like Fish or even Goodrich or Tiffany--
You're softer than they are--never
spent a night out of doors--but God
hope you're smarter. What if you
turn out a coward, how would you feel
then?

WADSWORTH
I'm afraid of that--maybe more than
dying. Maybe we all are--What are we
without our good names?

Wadsworth Sr. stands up again.

WADSWORTH SR.
You're sounding like an idiot--

WADSWORTH
I'm afraid of dying for itself Father--
of the pain, of my body rotting in some
tropical forest and no one knowing--
of a steel bayonet--right here!

He rips at his stomach.

WADSWORTH (CONT'D)
But--but I'm more afraid of dying a
rich boy in a bed and never knowing
hunger and dirt and--anger--I deserve
to know.

WADSWORTH SR.
You go and you may get what you deserve.

WADSWORTH
Yes, I think so--

CUT TO:

SWIMMING POOL--Romanesque, surrounded by pillars and bronzes. A man swims towards us--a valet waits with a towel and robe. The man stands up, it is Hearst. He looks and sees polished Italian shoes--he looks up--a splendidly dressed MAN, dark handsome, perfectly composed, stands behind the valet. It is RICHARD HARDING DAVIS, the premier war correspondent of the time.

HEARST

Davis.

DAVIS

You summoned me Mr. Hearst?

HEARST

I asked you to lunch--You don't work for me any longer--You don't have to obey a summons.

DAVIS

I never did.

HEARST

Don't play games Davis--I need you in Cuba--This is OURS.

DAVIS

Yours.

HEARST

No--ours--the Journal, Roosevelt--America--you and me--ours.

DAVIS

Mr. Pulitzer now employs me.

HEARST

Then quit--is it the money?

DAVIS

No.

HEARST

What then?

DAVIS

I've given my word.

HEARST

Words are broken.

DAVIS

Not mine.

HEARST
You're the best of breed Davis.
I'm accustomed to the best--

He gets out of the water--towels off.

HEARST (CONT'D)
Shouldn't I be? Look you're not
the only star in the heavens. I
can get Steven Crane--He wants to
go and he writes well. Maybe as
good as you--maybe better.

He takes a bathrobe.

DAVIS
I get shot at for a living, he
imagines he is. Besides, he's a
drug addict isn't he?

HEARST
What do I care as long as he's not
a coward. But I want you. What do
you say?

DAVIS
No.
(pause)
Will you be going?

HEARST
Of course.

DAVIS
As a combatant?

Hearst laughs--a wolfish knowing laugh.

CUT TO:

NEWSPAPER--THE JOURNAL--Headline reads: DEWEY DESTROYS
SPANISH FLEET AT MANILA BAY! Further down, smaller:
ROOSEVELT UNDER COLONEL WOOD TO COMMAND COWBOY CAVALRY.
The paper is put down--Leonard Wood sits at his desk,
Roosevelt before him.

WOOD
You deserve congratulations.

ROOSEVLET
I'm sorry about that article Leonard--
I have no control--

WOOD
I'm sorry Sir.

ROOSEVELT
Yes--I'm sorry Sir.

WOOD
I was referring to Dewey. He was
your appointment--

ROOSEVELT
I had a hand in it.

WOOD
It was your plan--your order that
had him coaled and ready.

ROOSEVELT
Secretary Long was on vacation--

WOOD
--And you took the--initiative.

ROOSEVELT
I suppose so.

WOOD
Overreaching--almost insubordinate--
certainly rash--but successful. You're
lucky this time Theodore. See that
it doesn't happen with me.

He stands up.

ROOSEVELT
Yes Sir.

WOOD
You can do something for us Theodore--
use that--initiative.

ROOSEVELT
Sir?

WOOD
Krag repeating carbines--smokeless
ammunition. There are only 17,000
such weapons. Do you think you
can get your hands on 875 of them?

ROOSEVELT
I should think so--

WOOD

Think so Sir.

ROOSEVELT

Yes Sir.

WOOD

Good--because I'm leaving for San Antonio tomorrow. We'll have the best food, best horses, finest shelter and medical, but we won't get to Cuba unless we have Krag repeating rifles. Make sure you have them before you come down. Do I make myself clear?

ROOSEVELT

Precisely Sir.

WOOD

And one other thing--the regiment has been expanded. You may bring the Fifth Avenue contingent. Hamilton Fish's mother should be pleased.

Roosevelt smiles.

ROOSEVELT

You won't be sorry--Is that all Sir?

WOOD

That's all.

Roosevelt turns.

WOOD (CONT'D)

I didn't catch that salute Colonel.

Roosevelt turns and snaps a good one--Wood returns it and he leaves.

CUT TO:

TRAIN STATION--SAN ANTONIO--The station is filled with onlookers, men in suits, farmers, old Texas cowhands, immigrants, etc. The women carry parasols, and have that grace so true to the turn of the century. Children have climbed lampposts, and all wave any manner of American flag. A brass band plays Sousa.

MEN--Standing in a long line in the foreground, hard weathered men, tough hands, leathery skin in all shades. They wear boots, sombreros, calico and worn denim--polished leather gleams. The train pulls in--steam obscures other men

piling out of passenger cars, boxcars, jumping off flatcars, etc. As the steam dissipates, the two groups stand facing each other.

FACES--Staring at each other, hard, not a hint of emotion--two hundred or so gunfighters sizing each other up in the street.

MAN

Where you from pardner?

OPPOSING MAN

Arizona! How `bout you compadre?

MAN

New Mexico! Yeeeha!

He sticks his hand out--the Arizona Cowboy takes his. They all howl and give war whoops and animal noises, grasping each other's hands, slapping backs, bear hugging. A few revolvers are fired into the station roof. Flags wave--the onlookers cheer.

CLOSE NASH--He is overtaken by the occasion, joining in, genuinely excited. All feel an instant camaraderie with their Western brethren. They've been brought here together because of what they are.

NEW MEXICO MAN

Took you boys long enough.

OTHER NEW MEXICO MAN

What the hell were you doin'? We were gonna' go to Cuba by our lonesome.

NASH

They kept stoppin' the train so that girls could give us pies and beer!

NEW MEXICO MAN

Same thing happened to us.

Somehow Nash has become separated from his fellow outlaws. He bumps into Henry Bardshar.

BARSHAR

What's your name friend?

NASH

Uh--Henry Nash.

He's surprised himself by saying it--thought he'd use an alias, but now it doesn't seem to matter.

NASH (CONT'D)

And you?

BARSHAR

Henry Bardshar--from Lordsburg--Where you from?

NASH

Arizona--kind of all over.

He turns and bumps into Rafael Del Castillo.

CASTILLO

I am pleased to meet you Arizona--it is for me an honor.

He shakes his hand--moves on. Nash turns around again, is slapped on the back by a huge hand.

KLAUS

Klaus Steinhoff--I am happy to be your friend.

Nash stares up at him. Klaus seems lonely and scared like a puppy, but he is happy that everyone seems to like him.

NASH

Where you from little feller?

KLAUS

Texas.

NASH

It figures.

CUT TO:

LEONARD WOOD--Watching all of this from afar on a hand platform, several Sergeants at his side.

VOICE

Colonel Wood Sir.

He turns--a BALDING MAN, strong as an ox, but weathered wearing an old Cavalry coat.

MAN

I'm Ol' Brodie Sir. The governor of Arizona put me in temporary command of our volunteers. I'm a mining engineer but I was a regular officer during the Geronimo war.

WOOD
Glad to meet you Brodie.

BRODIE
And this Sir is Bucky O'Neil.

O'Neil steps up and takes Wood's hand.

WOOD
I've heard a lot about you O'Neil.

O'NEIL
I hope it was good.

WOOD
You sound like the kind of officer
I'll need--Both of you--I'd like you
to meet Maximus Luna, my Captain from
New Mexico.

They shake hands with MAXIMUS LUNA.

LUNA
A pleasure and honor gentlemen.

WOOD
--And this is Captain Allyn Capron--
one of the finest officers in the
regular cavalry.

They shake hands with a tall, powerfully built BLONDE
OFFICER, with a large mustache--CAPTAIN ALLYN CAPRON.

WOOD (CONT'D)
Captain Capron will take you to your
quarters and begin to explain what's
expected of you. He can teach you
anything you'll need, you'll find
that there is nothing he can't do
better than you.

CAPRON
But of course Sir--that will change.
(to Wood)
By the way Sir, I've got 186 men
from Indian territory due in tonight.
Most are half-breeds--born on horseback--
they'll be double tough soldiers.

He salutes and leaves. Wood turns--O'Neil stops him with a
glance.

O'NEIL
Sir--I realize that I'm short on

formal military experience, but
I've had my taste of fighting.
What I'd like to ask Sir, is to have
a loose hand in training my men.
It may seem somewhat unconventional,
but I know what is needed Sir.

WOOD

Mr. O'Neil, this is a rather unconventional
unit--I don't care what you do as long as
they drill passable standard, get along
with the regiment and excel in combat.

O'NEIL

Oh they'll do that Sir--that I promise.

WOOD

Good, since you volunteered--I've got
a contingent coming from New York--
Fifth Avenue swells and Harvard football
players. You want a few of them?

O'NEIL

It would be my pleasure to turn
educated men into fanatics Sir.

CUT TO:

TITLE: NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANNA

A CHAMPAGNE BOTTLE--Is uncorked and poured. The "Fifth
Avenue Boys" are dining in the finest bordello in the French
Quarter. They are surrounded by LOVELY PROFESSIONALS, who
feed them cracked crab and play billiards with them. The
boys have been drinking!

GIRL (to Fish)

Who is he--and what does HIS father do?

FISH (indicating Goodrich)

Automobile tires--it's the coming thing.

GIRL

Oh.

KANE

Tomorrow Ladies, we join our regiment--
This means that you may not see us ever
again. Keep it in mind.

TIFFANY

Another toast Gentlemen--To luxury, for
tomorrow we will renounce it--

WADSWORTH
Does that include women?

TIFFANY
Women are not a luxury--they are a
fearful necessity.

GOODRICH
Yes, ask my father--To the abolishment
of worldly pleasure, until the end of
hostilities--like Knights Templars--

They raise their glasses.

KANE
Knights Templars--no wonder they were
such mean bastards.

Fish turns and stands, all eyes on him.

FISH
I think we should drink to discipline.
It is the one virtue from which all
others spring. With discipline comes
character, strength, courage.

WADSWORTH
Courage--Are you sure?

FISH
A certainty--for discipline requires it.

They drink.

SLEEK TEMPTRESS
Does this abstinence extend to tonight?

WADSWORTH
We didn't drink to abstinence--I thought
it was character--

KANE
Tenacious discipline--the strenuous life.

ALL
Here--Here--

WADSWORTH
What about rape and pillage--Are they
not a soldier's reward?

KANE
But we're gentlemen.

FISH
I'm tired of being a gentleman--I'm
tired of luxury--I need stronger stuff--
To rape and pillage.

They pour and drink.

GIRL
That's more like it.

Wadsworth kisses his Girl--she kisses him back.

WADSWORTH
You'll wait for me? No matter what?

HIS GIRL
Forever.

He turns and raises the bottle.

WADSWORTH
Death and Glory! May we meet on
the steps of Valhalla.

TIFFANY
King Death--To Hell with you!

GOODRICH
To the Regiment!

GIRL
"Roosevelt's Rangers!"

KANE
"Rough Riders!"

ALL
Rough Riders!

They drink and cast the glasses and bottles into the fireplace.

CUT TO:

DAWN--RIVERSIDE PARK--SAN ANTONIO--The huge Fairgrounds Building looms darkly against the lightening pre-dawn sky. A flicker or two of light comes from within. A Soldier steps into foreground, raises a bugle and blows reveille.

BUILDING--SERGEANTS crash through the doors, smashing trash can lids with boards.

SERGEANTS
Get up!

Get your sorry asses out of bed! Etc.

They stop short. The Exhibition Hall, large and dark, is dotted with lights of men smoking, a few lanterns are lit--a fire burns on the floor, and some cowboys are cooking their own breakfast.

SERGEANT
What the hell?

COWBOY
When's breakfast?

CASTILLO
We've been waiting all morning--the day's gone by.

SERGEANT (looks at pocket watch)
It's five-forty-five.

BARSHAR
What time do YOU go to work?

OTHER COWBOY
He ain't never rode line.

ANOTHER COWBOY
You ever round up stock?

Nash
You ever milk a cow?

SERGEANT
Alright get outside--Quick time--
We've got horses to choose and drill--

COWBOY
What about breakfast?

SERGEANT
Eight o'clock--after you get the hell kicked out of you.

He finds one man sound asleep--Klaus. He snores contentedly. The Sergeant kicks him hard in the ribs.

KLAUS
Papa?

SERGEANT
Get up you stupid behemoth! Whatta' you think's going on here?

KLAUS
I'm sorry Mr. Sergeant.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE--Horses wheeling around a huge corral--ropes sailing out--men calling for specific animals--horses kicking and rising, being pulled in. Saddles are thrown on--men biting horse's ears, while bits and bridles are forced in place--horses stomping, pawing the air--kicking through wooden railings--more ropes--overhands, hooligans--artistry and competence. Men swing up--feet jamming in stirrups--all manner of wild rides--crashes--headlong runs. Bodies are launched--men run over--all of this with tremendous skill and good espirit.

CUT TO:

A WILD HORSE--Mean, Roman nosed, any good cowboy would let this one go. This horse backs up into several others--bares its teeth! Nash walks in with a rope, carefully trying to avoid this creature and get one of the others.

O'NEIL (O.S.)
Put that rope on him buckaroo.

He turns and sees Bucky sitting on a fence. Nash points to the others.

O'NEIL (CONT'D)
No, that one.

He throws the rope poorly, misses.

O'NEIL (CONT'D)
You ain't much of a hand are you--
YOU--Injun!

He calls a TALL INDIAN, who walks over.

O'NEIL (CONT'D)
Help that boy get a saddle on that animal.

INDIAN
He ain't no good.

O'NEIL
The horse or the man?

INDIAN
The horse.

O'NEIL

I thought you said you could ride
anything with hair on it.

INDIAN

I can, but he can't.

O'NEIL

Go ahead--Let us see.

CUT TO:

THE INDIAN--Holding the horse by the head and biting its ear--it is now saddled, and kicks a piece of the corral to kindling.

INDIAN

He's ready--

NASH

What's your name?

INDIAN

Indian Bob.

NASH

Well Bob--I ain't a bronc rider--
I'm use to broke stock.

O'NEIL

Someone else's? Get on Sonny.

He swings up--Indian Bob lets go--the horse goes straight up, turns around in the air--kicks its legs out straight and fires Nash into space--he crashes down on the fence. The beast tries to bite him. O'Neil pulls him away.

O'NEIL

Just remember Sonny--I know your
type--I'll be watching you.

He turns to Indian Bob.

O'NEIL (CONT'D)

Your turn Son.

Indian Bob dusts himself off--cracks his knuckles and runs at the monster. He leaps on it so quickly, the animal can only run sideways and try to scrape him off on the fence. Everybody gets out of the way as they crash through the fence, snorting and bucking--Indian Bob hanging on one side then the other. They continue this way for awhile, taking them out towards the road--several cowboys run after to watch. Nash walks, followed by O'Neil.

ROAD--Indian Bob is smashed into a tree and comes off. He looks up as the cowboys cluster around him.

COWBOY
You all right?

INDIAN BOB
Sure thing.

He gets up, seeing if anything's broken.

O'NEIL
Thought you could ride anything.

INDIAN BOB
I didn't say how long.

O'NEIL
Well he's yours--and yours.
(to Nash)
You can get him broke or you eat
him.

He turns and leaves--some of the others go with him back to the main corral.

NASH
I thank you pardner-

INDIAN BOB
Oh it don't hurt much.

VOICE (O.S.)
I say.

They turn and see:

THE FIFTH AVENUE GANG--Standing in the roadway with large leather duffels, and dressed as one would expect.

FISH
--Could you help me find Colonel Roosevelt? I'm Hamilton Fish and these gentlemen and myself have come to join the regiment.

INDIAN BOB
Indian Bob--

NASH
Henry Nash--Good to meet you Fish.

COWBOY
 Roosevelt ain't here yet--Colonel
 Wood know you arrived?

TIFFANY
 No we just got here--Bill Tiffany.

They shake hands.

GOODRICH
 B.F. Goodrich--glad to make your
 acquaintance.

He shakes Indian Bob's and Nash's hands.

COWBOY
 Well you better tell somebody--
 Colonel Wood's headquarters are
 up the road about a mile.

FISH
 About a mile--

NASH
 Better take a horse--

WADSWORTH
 Thank you Sir.

NASH
 That one over there is a good `un.

THE HORSE--Standing, pawing the ground, grinding its teeth,
 thinking about new victims.

FISH
 You take him Craig--I'd like to
 see what's going on here.

WADSWORTH
 I'll sign us in.

He drops his valise, and walks calmly over to the animal.
 The horse tries to bite him--he steps around, grabs the
 saddle horn and reins.

WADSWORTH
 There, there now.

He steps up into the stirrup with a practiced ease and swings
 his leg over gracefully. The horse backs up violently, but
 he counters it with a turn--they spin quickly one way then
 the other and the beast tries to buck, but Wadsworth is ready
 and rides it out. The horse knows it has a master, snorts

the air. Wadsworth takes it around in a quick figure eight and ends up facing the amazed Westerners. His buddies show little reaction.

WADSWORTH

I'll be right back--it's a spirited mount.

He canters off smoothly.

NASH

I'll be damned--

INDIAN BOB

Where did he learn that?

FISH

Wadsworth is the best polo player in the country--Do you play polo?

INDIAN BOB

Never had the opportunity.

FISH

Good, perhaps I can teach you how. This is going to be fun.

INDIAN BOB

Let me help you with those bags.

CUT TO:

DUSTY PARADE GROUND--All manner of horsemen wheel their half wild mounts around--backwards, forwards, trying to ride together. They wear every kind of Western garb--chaps, Mexican legging, sombrero's, serapes, etc.. Suddenly two men canter by in suits and bowlers--then three more in perfect formation. O'Neil watches with Capron.

O'NEIL

Who are those fellas?

CAPRON

Eastern men--Roosevelt's friends.

O'NEIL

They look good.

CAPRON

They ought to--some of the finest athletes in the country. That big one is Hamilton Fish--I think he was Captain of the Columbia crew, first rate fullback and a damn

fine boxer.

O'NEIL
The Colonel said I'd be getting
some of those boys.

CUT TO:

DINNER--Cooked on open fires, steaks, bacon and potatoes--compliments of the civilian population who are throwing the barbecue. The cowboys, miners and hunters all cluster around Ham Fish who is arm wrestling with Klaus. Ham is putting up a good contest but is outclassed. Bill Tiffany and B.F. Goodrich help turn the meat and serve it. Wadsworth is binding Bardshar's sprained ankle. Kane is telling stories. The Fifth Avenue boys are having a grand time. In the foreground sits Nash with Irvine and Neville.

NEVILLE
They're breaking us up into troops
tomorrow.

NASH
Yeah--well I ain't gonna' be here
to see it.

IRVINE
You lighting out Henry?

NASH
I ain't taking another day of this.

NEVILLE
You goin' back for the money?

NASH
Would I pull a stitch on my compadres?

IRVINE
Darn right you would.

NASH
You're welcome to come along--fool
if you don't.

NEVILLE
I'd like to meet this Roosevelt
character--Make up my mind then.

NASH
What're you sayin'--You gettin'
patriotic?

NEVILLE

When them bands played and them
people waved at me--Hell, no one
thought well of me in my life--

IRVINE

Yeah--and it's warm here and the
food's good.

NASH

Suit yourself--Mother Nash never
raised no foolish children.

CUT TO:

NIGHT--FAIRGROUND BUILDING--DARK--A figure slips away--
watches the sentries and dashes from shadow to shadow.

ROAD--Nash walks along towards the train station. A train is
just leaving.

STATION--As Nash walks closer, somewhat cautious.

VOICE (O.S.)

You there!

Nash freezes, turns--a figure approaches, masked in shadow.

VOICE (CONT'D) (O.S.)

Who are you?

Nash stands up.

NASH

I'm one of Roosevelt's Rough Riders.

The man steps out of the shadows wearing a tan cavalry
uniform, carrying several rich leather bags and a slung
Winchester '95 rifle. It is Roosevelt.

ROOSEVELT

I'm well--I'm Roosevelt--

NASH

My God Sir, Welcome to camp.

ROOSEVELT

Sorry I'm late--I missed the earlier
train. Camp far from here?

NASH

No Sir--I'll get a horse and--

ROOSEVELT
No need son--we'll walk.

NASH
It's a couple of miles.

ROOSEVELT
Better--What's your name?

NASH
Henry Nash Sir.

ROOSEVELT
Well Private Nash--I don't see that well in the dark, so lead the way--and don't slacken the pace on my account.

NASH
Can I haul anything Sir?

ROOSEVELT
No, I'm quite accustomed to looking to myself--Carry on.

CUT TO:

BUGLER--Blowing reveille.

CUT TO:

MESS AREA--In the open outside of the Fairgrounds Building--there are great long tables where the men are eating. Some are leaving, others arrive. The officer's area is separate. Wood, Capron, Luna, O'Neil and Brodie are finishing their breakfast. A carriage pulls up--Roosevelt steps off and walks through the rows of tables toward Wood. A discernible stirring takes place, all eyes come up. As he walks, it grows quiet. Wood watches, stands up--the other officers stand.

CLOSE FISH--OTHERS--Fish watches closely too, and when Roosevelt is almost at the officer's tent, he begins to clap--others take it up, people bang plates, cheer, howl. It all is quite spontaneous and subsides rather quickly--everyone, most of all Roosevelt, is somewhat embarrassed. He turns, doesn't know what to say.

WOOD
Gentlemen, Lieutenant Colonel Roosevelt.

ROOSEVELT
Thank you.

He sits down.

CLOSE CASTILLO--WADSWORTH--COWBOYS--They stare at him, measuring him up.

CASTILLO
Not as big as I thought

INDIAN BOB
Where'd he get that outfit?

WADSWORTH
Brooks Brothers, New York. When did he arrive?

Nash looks up from his food.

NASH
I brought him in from the train station--last night.

CASTILLO
You--?

NASH
Special detail.

He continues eating.

COWBOY
Could he see outta' them glasses?

OTHER COWBOY
He wear 'em all the time?

WADSWORTH
Don't question his vision gentlemen--
He thrashed a man in the Dakota's for calling him "four eyes".

INDIAN BOB
Thrashed the fella'?

WADSWORTH
Thoroughly.

CUT TO:

OFFICER'S TABLE--Roosevelt wolfs down breakfast--

ROOSEVELT
We've got one thousand rifles and sufficient ammunition Sir--Due in

tomorrow--uniforms to follow shortly.

WOOD

Well done Theodore--well done--I thought
you'd handle it.

He slaps him on the shoulder.

ROOSEVELT

Had a bit of trouble with some of
the older Generals--they recommended
Springfield's and black powder.

WOOD

What on earth for?

ROOSEVELT

Said one could--hide behind the smoke.

WOOD

What did you say?

ROOSEVELT

Why Sir--I said this regiment is
not interested in hiding--

He slurps coffee.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

At least while we're shooting! Hide
behind smoke! What idiocy!

He looks around.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

I've prepared a report last night on
expected rates of fire--in skirmish,
assault and defense. Might prove
interesting from a logistics point of
view.

WOOD

Did you get some sleep?

ROOSEVELT

Heavens no--

He looks around--ingests some sausage.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

Well Sir! This--this is--bully!

He turns back to Wood and the others.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
I've had Brooks Brothers make up
uniforms for you Sir and all the
officers--

He looks down at his arm.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
What do you think?

CUT TO:

PARADE GROUND--The men are being broken up into squadrons, troops, platoons, and sections. They are still in civilian attire, and their horses are a little skittish, but with Sergeants calling out names and moving groups around, they are starting to resemble a formation. Wood and Roosevelt watch this from in front on horseback.

CUT TO:

UNDER A TREE--Richard Harding Davis observes quietly. He is splendidly dressed as usual, sporting a walking stick and binoculars. He watches the activity, and notices a tall thin YOUNG MAN dressed in black ten paces away. The man is writing feverishly--Davis walks towards him, he looks up.

DAVIS
You're Crane aren't you?

CRANE
Yes--and you Sir--

DAVIS
Davis.

CRANE
Of course.

They shake hands.

DAVIS
Didn't expect to see you here Crane--
thought you'd be with the Navy.

CRANE
This is where the action is old boy.
In the Navy they shoot at your ship--

DAVIS
Yes--and here they shoot at you. I've
read your book.

CRANE

Enjoy it?

DAVIS

Yes.

CRANE

Thought you would.

DAVIS

Good imagination--almost like the
real thing.

CRANE

Did I make any mistakes?

DAVIS

A few.

CRANE

I shall do better next time.

DAVIS

If there is a next time.

CRANE

Oh I'm sure of that--I have the luck
of a drunk.

DAVIS

You'll need more, it is dangerous
work.

CRANE

Perhaps YOU can look out for me.

DAVIS

I'll do what I can--Good seeing you
Crane--We shall be seeing a lot of
each other.

CRANE

Under different circumstances--
not as pleasant. Though you seem
to find war to your liking.

DAVIS

So far--I'm still alive--If I can
do anything, let me know.

CRANE

Perhaps you can recommend a good
brothel--I've never been here before.

DAVIS
I'll look into it.

CUT TO:

BUCKY O'NEIL--Rides before his troops--eighty men--lined up before him on horseback. Amongst them, are all that we have met previously. O'Neil stops.

O'NEIL
Dismount.

They do—they stand before their horses. He is still mounted.

O'NEIL
From now on this troop, G Troop, is your home. It is all you know or care about. Trust nothing else including the rest of this regiment. These are your brothers. In the coming weeks we are going to learn to be man killers. You will not be fit to have friends or acquaintances outside G Troop. You will not be safe in civilized society. From this day on you are to become predators--Wolves. You will learn to disregard all human life save that of G Troop.

CUT TO:

MEN--Sitting cross-legged. O'Neil walks around them.

O'NEIL
You think the Spaniard is easy prey? You think he comes from a sissified Europe that is rotting while we vigorous Americans grow big and strong? You are mistaken. The Spaniard is brave and bravery is enough! Have you ever seen a bullfight? Spaniards enjoy bullfights. Spaniards are cruel. The greatest feat of arms in the history of civilization was wrought by Spaniards. Do you know what that was? --YOU Cowhand?

Rafael Del Castillo looks up.

CASTILLO
The defeat of the Texans at the Alamo.

Much cheering and booing.

O'NEIL

Wrong! --Nine hundred Spaniards under Hernando Cortez killed 100,000 Aztecs. They did this with swords and then they raped the women and took the gold. It took them six months to kill all the men--and six more months to rape all the women.

CUT TO:

O'NEIL--Standing with an APACHE INDIAN before the troop, lined up in single file. He walks down the line.

O'NEIL

This man is an Apache--his name is Delchaney--He is the finest man-killing creature on earth. He has been taught since childhood to be patient, quiet and cruel. His people are human tigers. You must learn in one month what he did in his first twelve years. He will help you--I will help you. Forget all that you've heard about glory and the Espirit de Corps of the Cavalry--guidons waving in the wind, charging into history. This is what you must become. A man killer. War is an argument. The best way to end an argument is to kill the other fella'.

CUT TO:

ROOSEVELT--On horseback, the way he'd like to be painted--somewhat of a dramatic figure. He barks out commands as troops wheel in front of him. His voice cracks, and he has to clear his throat--men then, bump into each other as minor confusion prevails. Roosevelt hacks and coughs a bit, breathes deeply and starts again.

ROOSEVELT (V.O.)

Roosevelt to Cabot Lodge--One of the commonest taunts directed at men like myself is that we are armchair jingoes--wishing to see others carry out what we only advocate. My power for good will be gone--

ROOSEVELT--Riding in formation, the men choking with dust, calling out unheard commands--wheeling away.

ROOSEVELT--Unsaddling his horse, inspecting it.

ROOSEVELT--Attending to the Field Commissariat, making sure the food is fresh.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D) (V.O.)

--If I did not try to live up to that which I have preached. Moreover, it is disease which is to be feared in this war not the enemies rifles--

DUSK--ROOSEVELT--Mounting a fresh horse and leading the men in skirmish exercises, charging--dismounting--every fourth man holding the horses while the others advance, still without uniforms or rifles.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D) (V.O.)

Death would not be pleasant, feverish in some squalid hospital without ever seeing an armed foe.

ROOSEVELT--Watching Capron and Luna march the men in various drill formations using broomsticks for rifles. They pass before him--still in their motley civilian attire--a rancher, a miner, a marshal of Dodge City, a New York policeman, a Cherokee farmer, a tennis champion, a mule skinner--

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D) (V.O.)

Roosevelt to Wife--Dearest Edith, I hope your health has now returned, I do so miss you and the children. I do so miss the noise and chaos which fuels me. I do not go to this war with any undue exhilaration of spirits, recklessness, levity. I like life very much, I've led a joyous one--

The Christian names are such: Woodbury, Hamilton, Dudley, Guy. Others are: Happy Jack, Rattlesnake Billy, Cherokee Swift, Indian Bob. Men who hail from the Knickerbocker Club go alongside those who would be in Yuma Prison or riding for the 101 Brand.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D) (V.O.)

--But it is more important that men like myself go to war than to stay in offices and homes letting others carry out what we have urged.

ROOSEVELT--Marching at the head of 1st Squadron covered in dust and sweat, stained like everyone else. The whole group is tired and driven to exhaustion. Roosevelt stops--turns to his right. The Sergeants stop the column. He sees a kiosk in the park, where beer barrels have been set up. The barrels are cold, having been removed from iced water.

ROOSEVELT

Captain Capron--Dismiss the men to have a drink.

CAPRON

Beer Sir?

ROOSEVELT

Beer--I shall pay for it. They can have as much as they like, but they will stand inspection and if a man is drunk, he will be expelled from the regiment--Make that clear.

CAPRON

Yes Sir.

CUT TO:

KIOSK--With a hearty yell--1st Squadron 1st Volunteer Cavalry(on foot) descend upon the happy merchants.

CUT TO:

NIGHT--WOOD'S TENT--Wood is standing, Roosevelt sitting--a sheepish look on his face.

WOOD

You did what?

ROOSEVELT

I allowed each man a schooner of beer. They were hot. I paid for it from my own pocket.

WOOD

Outrageous--

He paces.

WOOD (CONT'D)

Did it ever occur to you that you will have to order these men to face enemy fire and bayonets and that some of them will die?

Roosevelt is confused.

WOOD (CONT'D)

If they do not obey your order you will have to shoot them for desertion or dereliction of duty. Right now they seem like your children, your team. Are you going to be able to see their blood seep into the ground because of something you had them do?

He turns around.

WOOD (CONT') (softly)

Any officer who goes out and drinks
with his enlisted men is not fit to
hold commission.
(pause)
That will be all.

Roosevelt gets up and leaves, carrying his hat.

CUT TO:

PARADE GROUND--Outside of the hall. Roosevelt stands alone in the dark, breathing deeply. Then with the proper growl, he begins to practice cavalry commands.

ROOSEVELT

Collumsss--Right--Hooo--Guidons--
For-wardd! etc.

INT. HALL--The men look up--they can hear him plainly. They are ready to sleep--many are already asleep. They wake up. Soon the whole hall is whispering to each other--then a silence prevails, only Roosevelt's commands punctuated by hacking, clearing and coughing.

CUT TO:

WOOD'S TENT--Woods is writing a report. Roosevelt stands in the entrance breathing hard.

WOOD

Theodore.

ROOSEVELT

Permission to enter Sir.

WOOD

Permission granted.

ROOSEVELT

I wish to say Colonel Wood that I
was completely wrong for drinking
beer with the men, and that I consider
myself the damnedest ass within ten
miles of this camp. That is all.
Good Night Sir.

He snaps a salute. Woods returns it, he turns sharply and leaves.

CUT TO:

DAY--G TROOP--Assembled on the parade ground. Others are drilling in squadrons behind them. O'Neil rides up with the Apache at his side.

O'NEIL
Castillo, Bardshar.

Castillo and Bardshar step their horses forward.

O'NEIL (CONT'D)
You are now acting Platoon Sergeants.
Take over the troop--Prepare for march.

Castillo and Bardshar give out orders turning the column. O'Neil rides to the head and they canter off the parade ground and into the countryside.

COLUMN--Moving along the levee of a river. Nash and Eli are riding side by side.

NASH
Where you from cowboy?

ELI
New Mexico--I'm a cook.

NASH
You our cook?

ELI
Them Army cooks are just doin' a job. With me it's natural--

NASH
Like how?

ELI
I see things in terms a' food. I see a cow--I think about stealin' it-- I see a horse--I knows how to cut it up and prepare it so's it don't taste like a horse. I see cat's different when I'm hungry--I see vegetables where others don't.

NASH
Yeah--like where?

ELI
People's yards.

Nash's horse jumps because the horse behind bit it.

NASH

What the hell--Can't you hold that animal?

Klaus is having a hard time. It is only because of his size that the beast doesn't run away from him. The horse is trying to get the bit in its teeth.

KLAUS

Who-o-o—Who-o-o-

Wadsworth, who is at his side, leans out and grabs the bit--holding the horse from bolting.

WADSWORTH

Now hold the reins in your right hand--tighter--not too tight--grip with your knees--turn him back around.

NASH

That dumb German ain't no hand.
How'd we draw him?

Bardshar rides up.

BARDSHAR

What's the trouble boys?

NASH

That sour-kraut can't hold his horse.
He's dangerous.

WADSWORTH

I think we can handle it. Alright
it's yours now.

He lets go. Klaus is obviously scared of the animal.

BARDSHAR

Well, keep the line straight. I'm liable to lose my job.

WADSWORTH

How can a man as big as you be scared of that little horse.

KLAUS

A horse is not little.

WADSWORTH

He thinks he is.

KLAUS

Maybe this one knows.

WADSWORTH
He'd be the first.

KLAUS
Some of us are lucky eh?

He seems to have it under control.

NASH
He's just stupid is all.

Klaus ignores him.

KLAUS (to Wadsworth)
Thank you--

WADSWORTH
Craig.

KLAUS
Klaus.

He shakes hands quickly not wanting to let up on the reins.

CUT TO:

MID-AFTERNOON--THE COLUMN--Comes to a railroad track, a train is waiting. O'Neil halts the column. It is very hot and sticky.

O'NEIL
Take a break and have some water--
Then load these cayuses on that train.

The Sergeants pass the word. O'Neil wipes his brow like he's too old for this activity.

O'NEIL (CONT'D)
Quite some ride in the hot sun eh?
Wheew--

CLOSE NASH--ELI--OTHERS--Nash shakes his head.

NASH
Maybe the sheriff's gettin' old--
Prescott could be easy pickens'.

ELI
Don't care, long as the train gets back by dinner.

Hamilton Fish and Kane look about.

FISH

Thought we'd go farther--I'm hardly sore.

CASTILLO

C'mon New York--Let's get these boys to work.

FISH

You heard the Sergeant--Move!

MONTAGE--Loading horses on the train.

CLOSE O'NEIL--Watches the last door close. There are empty flatcars behind the stock cars. O'Neil nods to the Apache Delchaney, who waves at the engineer. Steam pours out--wheels turn--the train moves out.

THE MEN--All afoot, start to move towards the flatcars.

O'NEIL

Hold it--Get on them cars and you keep goin'--out of this outfit!

They stop--one makes a dash. Delchaney smacks him with a cudgel.

O'NEIL (CONT'D)

Let him go Del.

He is past going. They watch the train pull away--disappearing into the trees.

O'NEIL (CONT'D)

I don't know about you boys, but supper means a lot to me. They stop serving it at 8 o'clock.

He starts running back the way they came. The men watch in anger and disbelief.

NASH

Son of a--gun.

CASTILLO

Come on Rough Riders--You want to starve? Move! Move!

He swats backsides--men start following O'Neil--Delchaney runs easily off to the side like an animal.

ELI

My feet hurt!

FISH
Get used to it.

He pulls Eli--claps his big hands on others.

FISH (CONT'D)
Come along boys, hasten forward--

GOODRICH
How about a race? Yale against
Columbia.

NASH
How about you shut up.

Indian Bob follows Delchaney--Wadsworth at his side. Bob
watches the Apache.

CUT TO:

THE APACHE--Sitting on his haunches watching O'Neil walk by
at a good pace. The New York boys have already gone. The
Apache looks at the rest of the column, strung out raggedly
along the levy. He shakes his head, gets up easily and runs
off.

COLUMN--Wadsworth is not as fit as Fish or Kane and he's
paying for it. He drags along quite disgusted with himself.
Nevertheless, he passes Nash who is rubbing his feet.
Neville comes up.

NEVILLE
On your feet Henry. Keep on goin'.

NASH
Look at you--What're you supposed
to be?

NEVILLE
Then stay there and rot you darned
fool.

He goes by. Eli hobbles along--winded, gasping.

ELI
I need--water--

NASH
Yeah, who doesn't.

Eli falls, crying--Nash gets up and starts off.

ELI
Don't leave me here--Pardner--Don't--

CASTILLO
You! --What's your name!

Castillo steps into foreground. He could run all the way.

NASH
Nash.

CASTILLO
Pick up your compadre Nash!

Castillo is just pissed off at being hot and having to do this.

NASH
He ain't nothin' to me.

Castillo runs up to him--swats him across the face, kicks him. Nash fumbles for a knife. Castillo pulls his, he knows how to use a knife.

CASTILLO
You want to kill me Senor? Do it now!

He grabs the knife away and pulls him back by the neck to Eli--makes him help Eli up.

CASTILLO (CONT'D)
You are going to be good amigos--

He runs on.

WADSWORTH--Limping. Klaus comes striding up.

KLAUS
Here give me your hand.

He takes Wadsworth's arm--puts it over his shoulder.

FRONT OF COLUMN--Kane, Tiffany, Goodrich and Fish strolling along, ahead of everyone else. Kane looks back at the column, steps to the side.

KANE
Some of the boys are having a hard time.

GOODRICH (winded)
They're used to riding horses not playing football.

KANE
I say we go back and give them
a hand.

FISH
We can still beat the others--each
carrying a man.

TIFFANY
I wouldn't go that far.

Kane and Fish peel off. Goodrich and Tiffany shake their heads and follow.

O'NEIL--Trudging along pushing himself. The New York boys go by.

O'NEIL
Where you goin' boys?

FISH
To pick up some extra weight--this
is not taxing enough.

CUT TO:

DUSK--PARK--O'Neil sitting on a picnic bench with Delchaney. They have their boots off. The men stagger by being supported by each other. Klaus carries a man over his shoulder, as does Bardshar. Castillo brings up the rear, making sure no one drops out. Nash and Eli walk in leaning on each other. Capron walks up to O'Neil.

CAPRON
I thought this was a cavalry outfit
Captain.

O'NEIL
I wanted them to see it from the
horse's point of view.

CUT TO:

NIGHT--HALL--Everyone is asleep--especially G Troop. Nash is on his cot, snoring. He stirs, turns over. A hand comes down around his throat. He gasps, gags, struggles--looks up at:

BUCKY O'NEIL--Leering in the dim light.

O'NEIL(whisper)
I know who you are Nash. I know
the type, told you so. Where were
you the night Roosevelt came in?

Runnin' out--

He gags.

O'NEIL (CONT'D)
Shoulda' made it Nash---`cause you
ain't never gettin' out now. You
either soldier or I'll kill you.

He lets go--Nash breathes--the two look at each other.
Suddenly the iron hand slams in again.

O'NEIL (CONT'D)
If someone dies because of you--I'll
have you pulled apart by horses. Savy?

He lets go and is gone.

CUT TO:

MORNING--The men sit on the ground, horses tied up behind. A wagon is brought up containing watermelons. Another wagon is covered in canvas. Regular Army Sergeants stand near it. O'Neil is in front. Delchaney is next to him. Nash leans over to Indian Bob.

NASH
Look at that red-skin. He don't
have anything human about him.
He don't talk.

INDIAN BOB
Got nothin' to say.

NASH
He's a wild injun--What are you?

INDIAN BOB
Sioux--You know, the ones that
got Custer.

O'Neil walks in front.

O'NEIL
I have something personal to ask.
Tell me the truth, I'll know otherwise.
How many of you have killed a man?
Hands.

Out of eighty, twelve raise their hands.

O'NEIL (CONT'D)
Delchaney.

The Apache goes down the line. Several put their hands down.

COWBOY
I never knew if I got him.

OTHER COWBOY
Mine was a long way off.

Delchaney stops at Castillo--looks in his eyes--nods yes.
Castillo puts his hand down. He goes to another OLDER TRAIL
HAND.

TRAIL HAND
I got four notches.

Delchaney nods yes--to another, he says no--they all stare at
the man.

O'NEIL
What about you Nash? Ain't you such
a bad hombre?

NASH
No Sir--I never hurt no one.

O'NEIL
Not face to face. --Alright then--
How many have killed a deer, a horse
or a cow?

Most raise their hands.

BARDSHAR
I killed a bear once--I didn't like it.

O'NEIL
That's fine Sergeant. You've killed
a lot of game Mr. Fish?

FISH
Yes, Sir I've been a fair woodsman
all my life.

O'NEIL
Then you take two of those who
haven't killed anything and have
them kill a deer before breakfast--
We'll eat it at dinner. Can you
do that Mr. Fish?

FISH
Sir, Yes Sir.

O'NEIL

Good, then you're now Sergeant Fish.
Any questions?

Fish raises his hand.

FISH

What are we to use as weapons Sir?
I've brought a pistol--

CUT TO:

WAGON--The canvas is pulled back, revealing crates of new Krag .30 cal. Carbines. They are passed out to each man, along with blue shirts, khaki trousers, belts and single action pistols.

SADDLES--Army type, brand new, laid out along the ground, along with blankets, harnesses, canteens, scabbards, etc..

CUT TO:

G TROOP--Magnificent in their new uniforms, moving in a column along a road. Kids and ladies wave from windows. Men tip their hats.

CUT TO:

FIELD--A wagon filled with watermelons.

MEN--Taking them out into a field.

CRANE--On a horse--wanders up from under some trees. He's obviously been following G Troop.

O'NEIL--Stands, watching the men fan out into the field. Many of the others kneel in the foreground, their saddles taken from the horses and laying in front of them.

CRANE--Raises binoculars, sees:

HAY BALES--Tied like scarecrows about two hundred yards out. Each one has a stick thrusting up from the "neck". Onto these, the watermelons are impaled. The men run back. The effect is a long row of human-like scarecrows with watermelon heads.

CLOSE O'NEIL--Notices Crane.

CRANE

I'm Crane, Captain O'Neil. From
the Journal.

O'NEIL
I know who you are. I read your book.

CRANE
Liked it I bet.

O'Neil nods.

CRANE (CONT'D)
Can I offer you a drink?

He produces a hip flask.

CRANE (CONT'D)
Or tobacco?

He lights a cigarillo.

O'NEIL
No thank you Sir.
(to men)
Prone positions! Load one round.

About a third of the men lay down, leaving their new rifles over their saddles.

O'NEIL (CONT'D)
Ready!

Bolts racked--

O'NEIL (CONT'D)
Fire.

A ragged volley--watermelons exploding, halved, clipped, falling apart. A few are still untouched.

O'NEIL (CONT'D)
You missed--You and you and you--
All those who missed get down there and kill the enemy! Get going--Run!

SERGEANTS
Run! Get moving!

They run down toward their targets.

O'NEIL
Butt-stroke 'em--Hurry it up.

The others join in yelling at them.

TARGETS--The men reach the targets, club and butt-stroke the watermelons.

O'NEIL

Now put a new melon on and lay down in front. The rest of you who hit your men--Go join 'em--

The others run down, led by Sergeant Fish.

CRANE

Rather novel approach.

O'NEIL

I thought so.

CRANE

Watermelon heads--Why not body shots?

O'NEIL

In the head usually works. Besides, it's harder to hit.

(to the men downrange)

Lie down in front after you put the melons up!

CLOSE FISH--TIFFANY--Putting the melons on the stick and laying in front of the straw-men.

TIFFANY

I don't know who's shooting--Do you trust this?

FISH

At least they're not trying to hit us.

BARDSHAR (O.S.)

Ready!

They try to get as close to the ground as they can.

BARDSHAR (CONT'D)

Fire.

A distant blast--pops overhead and the whine of the bullet going past.

FISH

Don't like it.

TIFFANY

Have to get used to it old boy.

FISH

No doubt.

O'NEIL--CRANE--Looking downrange.

O'NEIL

Next!

CRANE

You think it will help?

O'NEIL

Most men, no matter how tough they've lived, won't throw down on another.

CRANE

You mean kill him.

O'NEIL

That's right--

CRANE

Even if it's an enemy--bent on your destruction?

O'NEIL

Even so--How you think Hardin and Clay Allison always got their opponent? 'Cause they were better shots? Both men were drunken louts. They had the ability to murder their fellow man.

CRANE

Murder? It is, isn't it?

O'NEIL

You betcha'.

CRANE

You're going to make these men murderers?

O'NEIL

Gonna' try.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE--Wadsworth covered in spattered watermelon--Indian Bob shoots from the cross-legged position--Klaus shooting offhand, the rifle looking small. Eli on his back, looking up as the melon breaks, crossing himself. Kane and Nash running in, screaming and butt-stroking melons. Nash covered in melon. Fish firing with Goodrich and Bardshar from the sitting position--switching to the kneeling, then offhand.

Superb gun handling. O'Neil explaining the use of the loop sling. Castillo in the sling squeezing off a shot. Nash and Fish on their backs spattered with melon. Nash is horrified, Fish has his hands under his head, enjoying the sun.

CUT TO:

ROOSEVELT--Leading a column in cavalry drills. They look good, move sharply. They gallop across a field--he halts them, they dismount on the run, and the horse holders take mounts. The men move forward in three man rushes firing over each other forming a skirmish line. Roosevelt follows behind yelling commands.

CUT TO:

WOOD'S TENT--Roosevelt writing, Wood smoking a pipe.

ROOSEVELT

I think we should make Kane and Castillo Lieutenants and put them in B and E Troops.

WOOD

Leave Castillo where he is but make him a Lieutenant. What about Fish?

ROOSEVELT

First Sergeant material--Runs the asses off anyone.

WOOD

Not an officer?

ROOSEVELT

Too impetuous--a real fighting man.

WOOD

I thought it is a virtue in a fighting man.

ROOSEVELT

Impetuosity? Yes--tempered by prudence.

WOOD

How about you Theodore--are you a prudent officer?

ROOSEVELT

Oh most definitely Sir.

WOOD

Captain Capron says you sit your

horse well.

He tamps his pipe.

ROOSEVELT

He does?

WOOD

And that you show great enthusiasm.

ROOSEVELT

I've been told that.

Wood turns around away from him.

WOOD

All in all you're making up into
an adequate officer, Theodore.
Don't let it go to your head.

ROOSEVELT

No--I shouldn't do that.

CUT TO:

PRESS CONFERENCE--Fifteen reporters sitting around Roosevelt.
Wood stands in the background with Capron and Luna, a wry
smile on his face.

ROOSEVELT

Alright now--one at a time please.

NEWSMAN

Colonel! Tell us what you think
of these men!

ROOSEVELT

In my modest opinion Sir, and I'm
only one Lieutenant Colonel--I think
the 1st Volunteer Cavalry could whip
Ceasar's Tenth Legion. I think these
men could ride with Ghengis Khan! They
are without peer--the best of American
manhood. We've got Indians, New York
policeman, football champions, bronco
busters and bounty hunters--and one man
I'm sorry to say, used to work for the
Internal Revenue Service.

They all like this.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

These men are the product of the
frontier ethic and they represent

the best of what America was. But these same men will turn a new page in history and lead us to what America should become!

OTHER NEWSMAN

Are you advocating a new expansionist doctrine Colonel?

ROOSEVELT

I didn't say it--you did. I'm advocating Americanism and these boys will take it to Cubans who are starving for freedom, democracy and individual rights! Let the Old World take notice--You see, we in this regiment are like many little streams, coming from mountains, valleys--lakes, forests. But when we converge we become a mighty river strong and wide.

NEWSMAN 1

Very poetic Colonel--When do you leave for Cuba?

ROOSEVELT

As soon as we are called. And Gentlemen, we are ready.

CUT TO:

NIGHT--CAMPGROUND--Dog tents are set up in long lines. Roosevelt walks down these, each illuminated by a lantern. He comes to a cooking area--pots, Dutch ovens. A shank of meat turns over coals--stew is bubbling. He breathes it in.

ROOSEVELT

You there, is this regulation, Trooper?

ELI

No Sir, most of it is stolen.

ROOSEVELT

Stolen--yes. It does smell good.

Some of the men come out and stand around.

CASTILLO

Would you care for some Colonel--a taste?

ROOSEVELT

Don't mind if I do.

NASH
I'll get it Colonel.

ROOSEVELT
Thank you Private Nash. --Men, I thought you might find it interesting what the Spanish think of us--

He tilts his spectacles--holds a newspaper.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
Barcelona paper--reprinted by Mr. Hearst.
"The average American is five feet two inches, due to living entirely on vegetables."

He glances at the shank.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
"This, because they ship all their beef out of the country, so eager are they to make money." Ha! "One full grown Spaniard can defeat at least any three men in America." Ha!

Nash comes back with a plate full of steaming food.

NASH
Hell I ain't had a vegetable since I was seven.

INDIAN BOB
What is a vegetable?

WADSWORTH
It also says the Americans are led by a Ted Roosevelt, formerly a New York policeman and before that, a cattle thief and prize fighter. He now roams America with a group of thugs known as--"Rough Rioters".

Cheers and hoots. They all start singing "Hot Time in the Old Town".

ROOSEVELT
I'm still a good boxer.
(to Nash)
Damn fine venison Nash--the best I've ever had.

He walks off into the darkness. Nash goes over to Eli.

NASH
He remembered my name--and he liked

your deer meat.

ELI
Hell, that's some Mexican's goat.

CUT TO:

DAWN--FAIGROUNDS--G Troop falling in for morning inspection.
A Regular Army Sergeant named POLK inspects the line with
Fish.

POLK
These blouses are filthy--Straighten
up those leggings Sergeant--That's not
how they're tied.

FISH
The men prefer them that way so
they don't chafe Sergeant.

POLK
Are they so delicate?

FISH
I'll see to it Sir.

POLK
I need two men to clean the crap
out of the freight cars.

He comes to Wadsworth.

POLK (CONT'D)
Where'd you go to school Trooper?

WADSWORTH
Yale Sir.

POLK
And you?

NASH
Harvard Sir.

POLK
You'll do--Report to the railhead.

He turns to Fish.

POLK (CONT'D)
These men are unmilitary in their
bearing and demeanor. The whole lot
of you would never be allowed on a
regulation post. Do I make myself

clear?

FISH
Yes Sergeant. Very clear.

POLK
Yes what? What are you going to do about it?

O'Neil steps up.

O'NEIL
Get out of here.

POLK
I am conducting my inspection Sir and I demand the courtesy of being addressed by my rank.

O'NEIL
Get out of here Sergeant--Beat it!

The man harumphs and leaves--looking back over his shoulder.

O'NEIL (CONT'D)
Stand at ease Gentlemen--Your training is almost done. Soon we will be going to Florida and on to Cuba.

Cheers and hoots.

O'NEIL (CONT'D)
We will be leaving behind a friend of the Troop. He would like to say a few words to you.

Delchaney walks over, his hair short, and he's in a suit-coat. He still has that panther-like grace and cold eyes. He faces them.

DELCHANAY
My friends in G Troop, it has been an honor and a pleasure to train you. I only wish I could go with you, but my people are still prisoners of war and I have pressing duties at Carlisle Indian Academy. You have made me proud. You have made yourselves proud. Good day, good luck, and good hunting.

He turns and walks away with grace and dignity.

CUT TO:

NIGHT--NEW YORK CITY--It is late, the streets are empty, a fine carriage comes careening around the corner and gallops up to the New York Building. A lone dark figure in a cape gets out at the run and dashes inside.

PRESS ROOM--The presses never stop. Hearst, in opera cape looking like Count Dracula, strides in.

HEARST

Stop everything! Full front page--
"Spanish Fleet in Santiago Harbor".
Admiral Samson has 'em bottled up.

PRESS MAN

When did you hear Sir?

HEARST

Never mind boy--just take it that
I heard it first. Now get busy--
bring me a typewriter--I'll do the
copy.

A typewriter is wheeled in, paper inserted, etc..

HEARST (CONT'D)

Now things are going to happen. The
Navy's got 'em trapped--the Army will
have to invade before they're reinforced
from Havana. That means a real war boy.
There could be a naval engagement. We've
got to get a ship--

NEWSMAN

A ship?

HEARST

Big enough to put presses on and
supplies--food, paper, ink--guns.
Do I have a yacht that large?

HEARST LACKEY

I don't know Sir--You have several
yachts.

HEARST

If I don't have one--Buy one! Get
in touch with Remington, Crane,
Marshall, Creeling--We'll want to
depart in forty-eight hours.

HEARST LACKEY

Forty-eight hours! The Army can't
possibly be there for weeks.

Hearst is typing.

HEARST

We'll want to meet them on the beaches when they land. How can you cover an invasion without being there? Use common sense--Now get cracking!

CUT TO:

A PARK--SAN ANTONIO--With a band shell and lights. It is a lazy summer evening, warm and glowing. The Rough Riders sit on the ground all around the band shell, and listen to the strains of Strauss, etc.. Many of the towns-people surround the regiment--women in their graceful dresses, men in shirtsleeves holding their coats, young girls winking at the troopers. The officers sit in a tented area to the rear. Several Rough Riders have been asked to sit on the stage.

CONDUCTOR--A German bandmaster plays the William Tell Overture. At the appropriate moment, he motions with baton, and the men on stage stand and fire their revolvers. This causes everyone to slap leather--guns bristle and are thrust into the air. Over three hundred shots are fired before it subsides to the accompaniment of rebel yells, howls of exaltation and "Remember the Maine!"

WOOD--Visibly disturbed.

WOOD

If we don't get them to Cuba, they'll be shooting each other!

ROOSEVELT

Wait Colonel--Wait.

They quiet down and a woman steps out and begins to sing a beautiful, sad ballad from the period(if it were the Civil War, it would be "Lorena"). At first the men are nervous--then they begin to hum. Some of them start singing.

FACES OF THE MEN--Suddenly aware that this is their last night here. From now on, anything can happen. They know that some will never return--who will it be? Thoughts of home and family, of childhood, little girls, dogs, and first love pass through the whole group like a flood. Some weep unashamedly, others stare, stoic and alone, still others sing and lose themselves in their voices.

DISSOLVE TO:

NIGHT--STATION--Men loading onto passenger cars, freight cars, flat cars. All of San Antonio seems to be there to wish them off--children give them food, a few women kiss men

goodbye, a lot of hands are shaken, a lot of tears flow. A group of strumpets from a local red light district weep and wail, leaning on each other. Steam pours out. Wheels turn. The faces go by--Goodrich, Eli, Indian Bob, Hamilton Fish, Neville, Castillo, Wood, Capron, Roosevelt, Nash, Wadsworth. Steam obscures them.

CUT TO:

TRAIN--Chugging through the forests and southern landscape. Rough Riders hang out the sides of the cars. They see people waving American flags, Confederate flags, signs--WELCOME TO ALABAMA!, GIVE 'EM HELL ROUGH RIDERS.

ROOSEVELT--Standing between cars--sees flags on lean-to's and groups of poor black folk waving little flags.

A STATION GOES BY--A ragged group of Confederate veterans--gray threadbare uniforms, gray threadbare men. They come to attention and salute as the train passes--a sign--GEORGIA LOVES YOU ROUGH RIDERS.

AN OLD CONFEDERATE OFFICER--In his long coat and campaign ribbons, sits with a YOUNG BOY in a carriage. As the train clatters by, the boy looks up.

BOY

But they're wearin' blue Grandpa--
They are Yankees.

OFFICER

No Charles--they are Americans.

They wave.

CUT TO:

TAMPA, FLORIDA

TITLE: TAMPA, FLORIDA

A huge, disorganized mob of white and black(15%) American soldiers pack the bright, sandy street. Everyone seems to be going in different directions. On either side of the street, small frame houses and stores peel in the blistering sun. Locals(under umbrellas and straw hats) stand around watching the troopers. Kids, black and white, run around. Off somewhere, a Sousa band is playing. Train whistles scream.

ROOSEVELT--O'NEIL--Fighting their way through.

ROOSEVELT

I'm giving up on finding anyone. I
shall buy food with my own money. My

God! What a higglety-pigglety mess.
It makes you wonder if anyone is in
charge.

DAY--HOTEL BALLROOM

TITLE: HEADQUARTERS, 5TH CORPS

We follow a pitcher of lemonade being set down before GENERAL WILLIAM SHAFTER, by a hotel waiter. The 300 pound general is pitched back in his chair, wiping sweat from his pasty white face. A "U" of tables has been set up, and around Shafter sit his generals: LAWTON, Kent, and Joe Wheeler, as well as other assorted brass and staff.

SHAFTER

Oh God I hate this heat.

WHEELER

The trains are backed up from here
to Columbia, South Carolina.

SHAFTER

Yes General, I know--Quarter Master?

QUARTER MASTER

Sir, we have no way of knowing what exactly is on those trains. The cars aren't marked and all the bills of lading are stuck in the Tampa Post Office--which is run by only five locals, three of them WOMEN.

SHAFTER

Well, assign Army men to the Post Office.

QUARTER MASTER

We have Sir. But these things take time.

SHAFTER

I don't have time. Admiral Sampson has trapped the Spanish fleet in Santiago Harbor. He has the city blockaded and has notified McKinley that a landing force of 10,000 men could take place in forty-eight hours.

LAWTON

How would he know that?

SHAFTER

Yes, exactly. How would he? Our

transport ships are not even here yet. Rations and supplies are still aboard trains, and we haven't any idea which trains. I've never seen anything like it. Never seen anything like it in my lifetime--Orderly, bring me some more lemonade.

They all look at him.

HOTEL--LATER--Wheeler comes out of the main entrance followed by his son, WILLIAM, a young Lieutenant. Gentleman officers seem to be everywhere. Many have taken to white rocking chairs and are being served cool drinks by the hotel waiters.

WHEELER

This fella' Shafter is in over his head. Way over. Big as a house, to boot.

WILLIAM WHEELER

I hope you were polite Father.

WHEELER

Well what if I wasn't? What the hell can they do to me? I'm a volunteer. I'm a U.S. Congressman. I'm here at the personal request of the President. And I'm a Reb. I've got these Yankee boys by the longjohns.

An OFFICER steps up to them and salutes Wheeler.

SWAYLES

General Wheeler. I trust you won't mind this slight interruption, but I am Horatio Swayles, Sir. I was a member of the Union Cavalry that opposed you in the fighting around Atlanta.

WHEELER

How do you do Colonel? This is my son, William. You'll forgive me if I tell you Atlanta is not my fondest memory.

SWAYLES

Of course General. But I must say it is nice seeing so many Civil War veterans out here in these rocking chairs, getting reacquainted.

WHEELER

(looking around, not liking it much)
Yes, it is--it's damn nice.

SWAYLES
Do you see that gentlemen, over yonder?

SEVERAL SWELLS--In hand tailored uniforms, having tea and cucumber sandwiches.

SWAYLES (CONT'D) (O.S.)
The volunteer captain who is standing--
that Sir, is John Jacob Astor Jr., son
of the richest man in America.

BACK TO SCENE

WHEELER
Why on earth would a man with all
that money take up soldiering?

SWAYLES
Why, because he is a patriot, General.
We're all in this together. The North,
the South. The important people as well
as the common ones. Don't you agree?

WHEELER
Why--yes, yes indeed. Well, good seeing
you Sir.

SWAYLES
Thank you General.

He salutes and the Wheelers move on.

WHEELER
Should have killed that son of a
bitch, so he couldn't breed.

CUT TO:

TENT CAMP--ROUGH RIDERS--On the edge of a run down part of town--between abandoned houses--and running into the streets, the fields--suggesting the lack of room. Confusion reigns. Capron and other officers walk through--hats in hand, frustrated.

CAPRON
Where are the horses?

O'NEIL
Still at the railhead Sir.

CAPRON
Then build corrals there--We'll keep
'em close to the train in case we

have to move fast.

O'NEIL
I'll get it done.

CAPRON
Rations?

CAPT. LUNA
This Sir.

He holds up a red painted can, taken from a crate with Japanese writing on it.

CAPT. LUNA
Four year old canned beef--it was to be sent to the Japanese-China war, but the war ended, so our government bought it.

BRODIE
Some of it has exploded in the heat.
The men call it "embalmed beef."

CAPRON
It's not a fit ration. We'll have to do something. I'll bring it to Colonel Roosevelt's attention.

O'NEIL
Sir, uh my men are trained for just this sort of situation. I believe they could handle this.

CAPRON
For the whole regiment? What do you have in mind O'Neil?

O'NEIL
I'd rather not say Sir--but they can handle it.

CUT TO:

NASH--Standing before some of the others, including Eli.

NASH
So what you're saying is that it's alright to--steal anything?

ELI
Figured you'd already skulked it out.

NASH
I've been talking with the Buffalo

Soldiers--They're camped down the road.

WADSWORTH

They've been given the job of Provost
Guard--that's police for all of you.

NASH

I know what it is--

WADSWORTH

Doesn't seem to make the white citizens
happy, seeing negro horsemen arrest
miscreants.

NASH

Miscreants? Well the good part is they
know where everything is--cathouses,
gambling, liquor--

ELI

What about livestock?

WADSWORTH

Liquor? I thought this was a dry
county--Where would you find liquor?

NASH

Ice cream parlor--

ELI

What about chickens? Birds of
any kind?

WADSWORTH

Why not dogs and cats?

ELI

Why not?

WADSWORTH

I didn't mean it.

ELI

There's always the swamp--I hear
there's a lotta' wild critters in
that swamp. Take you right down.

WADSWORTH

We'll need Sergeant Fish.

NASH

Hell, we could use that Apache.

INDIAN BOB
It's a dirty job boys--but somebody's
gotta' do it.

CUT TO:

STERN LIEUTENANT--Regular Army, a white officer of the
9th Cavalry. He stands before O'Neil at his tent, a BLACK
SERGEANT MAJOR holding his horse.

LIEUTENANT
Lieutenant John Pershing Sir, 9th Cav.
You requested me?

O'NEIL
Yes Pershing--I understand you have
a crack outfit here. Best in the
Regular Army.

PERSHING
That's right Sir. We're combat
soldiers and proud of it.

O'NEIL
You've been with these negro troopers
a long time?

PERSHING
They call me Black Jack Sir. They'll
follow me anywhere, and I couldn't be
in better company.

O'NEIL
Well then, you can appreciate that
my men are somewhat unrefined, not
quite housebroken. They call us--
Rough Riders.

PERSHING
I know Sir.

O'NEIL
They're up to a fighting edge. Keen
and sharp as a knife. But uh, they
need a little understanding.

PERSHING
We'll accept no breach of military
behavior Captain--

O'NEIL
Wouldn't ask for that--Would you and
your Sergeant like a little bourbon
whiskey with me?

PERSHING
This is a dry county Sir.

O'NEIL
But would you like some? --A drink
between fighting men.

PERSHING
I don't see how one would be--

O'NEIL
--A breach of military behavior--No,
I don't either.

He turns.

PERSHING
Sergeant Buck, would you care to
join us?

SGT. BUCK
Sir.

He gets off his horse.

PERSHING
May I ask the Captain how he procured
that ration?

O'NEIL
I was saying my men are--unconventional--
Need to be understood in that light--Ice
cream parlor.

PERSHING
Ice cream parlor?

O'NEIL
Yes--it's referred to as a General
Robert E. Lee Soda.

PERSHING
Of course.

CUT TO:

NIGHT--Hotel verandah--officers and their wives stroll across
the wide verandah or chat on the lawn. Roosevelt walks with
Edith, his arm in hers.

ROOSEVELT
My heart soared to read your letters
and to know that you were well again.

But I truly wasn't prepared for the
sight of you.

EDITH
I look well?

ROOSEVELT
Ravishing! I suggest we adjourn to
our room before dinner.

EDITH
Oh Theodore--after all these years
of marriage.

ROOSEVELT
Yes--I'm talking about now.

EDITH
But I just got here.

ROOSEVELT
You've been here an hour.

A MAJOR salutes, Roosevelt returns it.

MAJOR
So pleased to meet you Colonel--
I've been meaning to discuss your
work on North American elk--

ROOSEVELT
Dee-lighted--but perhaps another time.

He shakes his hand and moves on.

EDITH
You look fit Theodore--

ROOSEVELT
I am fit--I feel very fit.

EDITH
You know--on the way down, the Southern
people waved flags at the train. Little
American flags. They gave the soldiers
coffee with molasses and sweets, and the
soldiers gave the girls their buttons.

ROOSEVELT
Remarkable, let us adjourn to the room.

EDITH
But we are expected to dinner at nine.

ROOSEVELT
We'll make it.

He turns her and they stroll gracefully inside.

CUT TO:

CRANE--Watching them go, he has a drink in his hand. A short, intense MAN walks over.

MAN
Crane?

CRANE
Sir.

MAN
I'm Marshall--We shall be at the front together. I work for the Journal too.

CRANE
I'm now syndicated--I've struck a deal.

MARSHALL
Does that make us competitors?

CRANE
I'm afraid so, but I would be happy to get drunk with you sir.

MARSHALL
Capital--You're a gentleman Crane.

CRANE
I am a sporting gentleman and I've money to waste and the desire to see it squandered. I'm ready for war sir, and as prepared as this Army, and I am drunk sir.

VOICE
Proud of it?

They turn to see Richard Harding Davis. Dressed for the evening.

CRANE
Ah Davis--I'm merely talking the truth--Is that not our vocation?

DAVIS
Truth is the first casualty in war

they say.

MARSHALL

Look at you Davis--"Dandy Dick".
Dining with the generals?

DAVIS

Some Cuban señoritas, quite beautiful,
from the very best exiled families.

CRANE

I shall find a señorita forthwith.

DAVIS

You can't get in--it's a private
affair. You need an invitation.

CRANE

Then I shall meet one elsewhere.

DAVIS

And where would that be?

CRANE

That big lemonade stand on the way
to the docks--It's a whorehouse. I
have an invitation.

He tips his hat and staggers off.

MARSHALL

A brilliantly disturbed young man.

DAVIS

They don't usually grow old. I
think this one might get what he's
seeking in Cuba.

MARSHALL

Then, we'll have to look out for
him--C'mon now Dickie, tell me what
great scoops you've uncovered this
evening.

DAVIS

There are only two stories down here
Marshall, the ineptitude of the American
Army and Teddy's Wild West horse show.

CUT TO:

ROOSEVELT--Buttoning up his collar, looking out of an
upstairs window. He feels the tropical night breeze on his
face.

ROOSEVELT
Do you think it matters?

EDITH (O.S.)
What?

ROOSEVELT
To spend yourself in a worthy cause?

She comes up behind him in her nightgown, straightens his collar.

EDITH
Must you really leave?

ROOSEVELT
I can't sleep in a hotel when my men
are sleeping on the ground.

EDITH
It might be the last night we--

He puts his finger softly to her lips.

ROOSEVELT
Then it was well spent.

CUT TO:

DAY--INT. SITUATION ROOM--WHITE HOUSE--A huge painted map of the Caribbean--lines and flags stuck in it denoting ships--American, Spanish. A large map of Cuba is next to it, with plaques denoting Spanish units, etc.. The room is filled with generals, admirals, secretaries of departments, cabinet members. McKinley is escorted to the map by Hay. SECRETARY OF WAR ALGER awaits him.

ALGER
The time is ripe Mr. President.

MCKINLEY
Why?

ALGER
Because they haven't moved a single column from Havana to reinforce Santiago.

MCKINLEY
Why not?

ALGER
Indecisiveness.

HAY
Maybe they've got something up their sleeve.

MCKINLEY
Well, it's well hidden. Maybe they're just stupid or lazy.

HAY
--Or don't take us seriously.

They all look at McKinley--this puts it on the line.
McKinley glances at Hay.

MCKINLEY
You set me up didn't you?

HAY
I've no idea what you mean,
Mr. President.

MCKINLEY
Alright you sons of bitches--
Do it.

They clear and look to a table, where a telegraph operator sits tapping, a GENERAL standing over him.

GENERAL
War Department to 5th Corps Headquarters--
Begin Offensive Operations.

CUT TO:

FIGHTING JOE WHEELER--WILLIAM WHEELER(SON)--Riding through the Rough rider camp. Men come to attention, others come up out of tents to see him.

ROUGH RIDER
Afternoon General.

OTHER ROUGH RIDER
Come for supper?

WHEELER
Where's your commander?

STILL ANOTHER
Upwind of them latrines--between the food and the garbage ditch. Green tent.

WHEELER
Much obliged Trooper.

STILL ANOTHER
Don't mention it General.

They ride on.

WHEELER
These boys remind you of anything, Son?

WILLIAM
No Sir.

WHEELER
`Cept for them millionaires--They're red-necks, white trash--just like you and me.

WOOD'S TENT--Wheeler sits with his son, William, at the table. Eli puts out a tin plate, jug and utensils. Roosevelt and Wood pace.

ROOSEVELT
Departure in twelve hours? Why weren't we informed?

WHEELER
I'm telling you--Let me have some of the stew, son.

Eli ladles a cup full.

WHEELER (CONT'D)
What kind of meat is that?

WOOD
We've no time to lose.

ELI
Hog--and gator.

WHEELER
Can you boys get up in the middle of the night and move without a fuss?

WOOD
We can.

WHEELER
That's half the battle--gettin' there first. Where'd you get fresh hog?

ROOSEVELT
We have one company that has been trained to forage.

WHEELER (laughing)
Forage! Stole that hog--

ELI
Caught the gator and the snake.

WHEELER
Snake?

ELI
Footless animal stew.

ROOSEVELT
Where Sir? Where do we have to get
to first?

WHEELER
The boats! There ain't enough of 'em.
They got you on transport with the 71st
New York. Boat'll only hold one regiment.
Better be yours.

WOOD
Who will decide?

Wheeler spears a piece of hog--his son slurps up the gravy
from his plate.

WHEELER
Possession! It's nine tenths of the
law son!

ROOSEVELT
We'll move immediately.

WHEELER
Hold up--Hold your horses. The 71st
just got the word like you. They're
at Tampa Heights, now I've never seen
any bluebelly infantry that could pick
up and march nine miles in less than
a day.

He belches.

ROOSEVELT
We'll be mounted to boot.

WHEELER
Mounted on what--you ain't taking any
horses. Dismounted Cavalry. What's
in this jug?

He pours some, looks like rum.

ROOSEVELT
We've trained as Cavalry!

WHEELER
If you wanna' fight, it will have
to be on foot.

He taps the plate.

WHEELER (CONT'D)
More snake my good man--and some hog.
(to Roosevelt)
Where are your horses?

ROOSEVELT
At the railhead.

WHEELER
Good thinking boys--you can take
the train.

CUT TO:

DUSK--LEVEE--Approaching the Port of Tampa. The 71st New York trudges along in a long dusty clanking column. Sergeants call cadence. A train whistle is heard. They turn and see:

LOCOMOTIVE--With the light on, leading a long line of freight and flatcars crowded with howling, raucous men. The Rough Riders are waving hats and singing.

THE NEW YORK INFANTRY--Looks up the levee as the train trundles by. In the first boxcar, standing in the door, in his khaki uniform is Roosevelt, light glinting off his glasses. The New Yorkers stop and stare in awe as the Rough Riders glide by.

CUT TO:

NIGHT--TAMPA DOCKS--Mass confusion. Baggage, mixed up units, recalcitrant mules, and an overwrought, confused COLONEL HUMPHREY, 5th Army Quartermaster, with his manifest.

WOOD
Colonel Humphrey, Colonel Wood, 1st
U.S. Volunteer Cavalry. What ship
are we to board?

HUMPHREY
Aah, let's see. You're on the Yucatan,
Pier 16, down that way. You're with the

2nd Infantry Regiment and the 71st New York Volunteers--That can't be right.
You'll never get three regiments on that ship--My God, I've got to get some sleep.

He looks up, and they're gone.

WOOD (shouting)
Drop the baggage Sergeant Tiffany,
Remain with seven men and guard it.
Regiment! Double-quick time! Yo!

They make a mad scramble after Wood to the ship.

U.S.S. YUCATAN--A flat decked steamer. Roosevelt is at the bottom as Wood rushes up the gangplank. The Sergeants urge the men on as fast as they can.

ROOSEVELT--Watching--Sergeant Tiffany and his men, aided by others, especially Private Klaus, form a line and begin passing baggage up.

71st NEW YORK--Marching up the dock.

KLAUS--Handing prodigiously heavy objects up to be taken aboard.

71st NEW YORK--Assembling in companies before the ship.

ROOSEVELT--Follows Tiffany up the gangplank and it is raised.

A COLONEL OF THE 71st--Steps forward, looks at the deck crowded with hard, bitter men.

COLONEL 71ST
This is my ship Roosevelt! You'll not do this to me! Lower that gangway. That's a direct order!

ROOSEVELT
I'm sorry Sir, but my superior, Colonel Wood has ordered me to hold it.

COLONEL 71ST
This is my ship!

ROOSEVELT
We seem to have it and we're going to keep it.

The Rough Riders show the glint of their rifles.

COLONEL 71ST
You'd threaten us?! You'll be ruined

in New York Roosevelt. Ruined! Sergeant Major, about face the regiment and march.

As they do, the Rough Riders pelt them with coal and howl and yell. Two CIVILIANS remain with a pile of equipment. They have gotten pelted as well.

ROOSEVELT
Cease fire-Cease fire! Who are you?

CIVILIAN
We're the Vitagraph company--Moving pictures! We're going to record the war.

ROOSEVELT
Moving pictures--could be fun. I can take you. Lower for them Sergeant Fish.

WOOD
And let's get out of here.

CUT TO:

WHITE HOUSE PORCH--McKinley sits in a bathrobe reading the Journal. Hay and Alger are brought in by his secretary.

HAY
Good morning Mr. President.

ALGER
The Expeditionary Force has landed Sir.

MCKINLEY
It says here there was no loss of life. I don't believe Hearst, but his intelligence sources have proved more accurate than ours so far.

ALGER
Several men drowned as well as a few horses.

HAY
It was a circus as far as I can tell. The horses were dumped overboard. Roosevelt lost one of his and was fit to be tied. Half the poor animals swam out to sea, and then a sharp 10th Cavalry trooper blew recall on his bugle and turned them around.

ALGER
They are expanding the perimeter towards

Siboney. All in all it has been a success.

HAY

Bull manure! If one company of Spanish soldiers had opposed them, they'd all be dead and we'd be a third rate agricultural experiment.

He stands up.

HAY (CONT'D)

God looks after drunks, madmen and our Army.

MCKINLEY

Hearst's man said it resembled a yachting party. Where are the Spanish?

HAY

The Cuban insurrectos whipped 'em. Sent them back to defend Santiago.

ALGER

We have merely to march there and-- take it.

HAY

This Army will be lucky to find Santiago. They landed at Daiquiri.

MCKINLEY

Daiquiri, isn't that a new summer cocktail?

HAY

You're getting the idea.

CUT TO:

NIGHT--SIBONEY--SOUTHERN CUBA--A huge sprawling mess on the beach. Soldiers, sailors, ragged Cuban insurgents mill about amidst piles of scattered baggage, equipment, ammunition crates, etc. Horses and mules run wild with men chasing them. Great bonfires burn. Searchlights from ships trace across the water, the trees, etc.. Tents are being erected. Parts of units move about like gangs. Fist-fights break out.

WATER'S EDGE--Hundreds of men loll about, many naked, enjoying a tropical bath. Rifles are piled in disarray on the beach. Artillery is stuck at the water's edge. Through this calmly rides General Wheeler and his son William. Wheeler looks it all over, shaking his head. He comes upon a group of armed insurrectos looking ragged and thin.

WHEELER
Cuba Libre! Viva Garcia!

CUBAN
Hey--You get food jefe! We are hongry.

WHEELER
You know where them Spanish bastards are?

CUBAN
Chure, we can show you all the
bastards you want. You get us some
food hokay?

WHEELER
Stay here boys--I'll see what I can do.

They ride towards some tents.

WILLIAM
If those Spaniards had any sense, they'd
hit us on the beach here.

WHEELER
Don't say it too loud.

They dismount before the headquarters area. A sentry comes to attention as they go in towards the tents. Wheeler stops his son outside. They can see two GENERALS standing in an open tent, another sitting at a desk. Several COLONELS confer around a table. Their voices drift to them.

GENERAL YOUNG
He isn't coming ashore?

COLONEL
Not until tomorrow, if the sea is calm.

GERNERAL LAWTON
--And they get a bigger boat.

CLOSE WHEELER--He leans over to his son.

WHEELER (whispers)
Must be General Shafter--too big
to land. Ought to swim him ashore.

LAWTON--YOUNG--COLONEL--Arguing.

COLONEL
It'll take two weeks to sort all
this out.

GENERAL LAWTON
We've got to guard it. Put up a perimeter defense.

GENERAL YOUNG
Use the cavalry--Roosevelt's men and the negroes. Let the infantry slowly probe towards Santiago with artillery support.

COLONEL
We can bring some cruisers up here to help--Bombard the roads.

CLOSE WHEELER--He motions his son back. They leave.

WHEELER
Let's get outta' here!

CUT TO:

WHEELER--Looking down from his horse at the Cubans. He writes a requisition order.

WHEELER
You take this to the Quartermaster General--he won't argue--I outrank him.

A MAN, as ragged as the others steps forward.

MAN
Frederick Funston, General. These are my men.

WHEELER
You an American?

FUNSTON
Soldier of fortune--I'm commander of General Gomez' artillery.

WHEELER
I don't see any artillery.

Funston pats the Colt Single Action on his hip.

FUNSTON
Just this. You want to see the Spaniards they say.

WHEELER
That's the idea. You know where they are?

FUNSTON

I do Sir.

WHEELER

Lead on, son.

CUT TO:

JUNGLE PATH--Bathed in moonlight. The sound of beach activities drifting up from far away. Wheeler rides with Funston, his son behind. Other guerrillas are fanned out on either side.

WHEELER

In the big war, the North could've crushed us son. Crushed us. But for two and a half years they lost. Why?

FUNSTON

Why?

WHEELER

'Cause they waited son. They thought, they reconsidered while we pasted the son's of bitches. We don't have that kind of luxury down here son. If malaria and the yellow jack get us, we won't last three weeks!

Suddenly the point Cuban freezes like a pointer. Funston pulls a Winchester from a scabbard. Shadows become visible in front of them.

VOICE

Alto!

Funston raises his rifle smoothly and fires--one drops--he levers another round and shoots a second one as the shadows disappear. Flashes erupt from where they went. Bullets zing past--dirt kicks up. The Cubans fire and howl, screaming at the enemy running about. The enemy fire increases--flashes all up and down the front. Wheeler steadies his horse. His son stays close at his side.

FUNSTON

We better get you out of here General.

WHEELER

Nonsense--I've seen worse--Besides they're mostly shootin' each other.

He backs his horse into the jungle. The firing subsides.

WHEELER (CONT'D)
Jittery ain't they? Son, go down to
the beach and fetch me the Rough Riders
and the 10th.

WILLIAM
Yes Sir--Right away Sir.

He turns and gallops down the road.

CUT TO:

WILLIAM WHEELER--Standing before Wood, Roosevelt, O'Neil,
Pershing.

WILLIAM
General Wheeler presents his compliments
Sir, and asks kindly if you could form
your regiment. You are cordially invited
to join him in the forthcoming engagement.

WOOD
Do Lawton or Young know about this?

WILLIAM
General Wheeler is the ranking officer
ashore Sir, and does not need to consult
with anyone else.

ROOSEVELT
He's found the Spanish? Your father?

WILLIAM
General Wheeler was enjoying a spirited
skirmish when I left Sir. As he would
say, time is awasting.

WOOD
We will be on the road in an hour.

WILLIAM
And you Lieutenant?

PERSHING
We'll be on their flank.

WILLIAM
One more thing--Sir--Gentlemen--Try
not to make a fuss.

He turns and mounts his horse.

ROOSEVELT
His father's a pistol and the boy's

a son of a gun. Bully for him! A gamecock of a fellow!

CUT TO:

NIGHT--BEACH CHAOS--Men chasing around with torches trying to catch a horse, others splashing into the water. A man in the foreground is already sick and vomiting. Everywhere people argue. Behind all this, on the road hidden by the trees, men are marching.

CLOSE ROOSEVELT--Walking, leading his horse at the head of the column. The two Vitagraph Film Makers follow with a mule and then the Rough Riders. Ahead stands Richard Harding Davis and Marshall, both in light tropical suits and cork helmets.

DAVIS

Colonel Roosevelt, may I ask where you are going?

ROOSEVELT

We are moving Mr. Davis, that is apparent isn't it?

DAVIS

And Colonel Wood--Where is he?

ROOSEVELT

Conferring with the General about our move.

MARSHALL

Why aren't you with them?

ROOSEVELT

I wasn't invited.

They walk along with them. A clanking is heard in the line.

FISH (O.S.)

Tie that thing down Trooper! You want everyone to know you're here?

SERGEANT (O.S.)

You heard it--Tie down any loose ends.

OTHER SERGEANT (O.S.)

I want it quiet--like Indians! Pass it on.

DAVIS

Colonel you're up to something.

ROOSEVELT
I've no idea why you'd think such
a thing.

As he says this, they become aware of another column marching parallel in the jungle, on a further track. Davis and Marshall look out at these men--black troopers of the 10th Cavalry, moving silently behind Pershing, who walks his horse. The whole and sudden appearance of these orderly, determined units, partially hidden, advancing somewhere in silence, gives off a vision of American military prowess--looking for trouble.

DAVIS
We're going with you if you don't mind.

MARSHALL
Why aren't you riding your horse?

ROOSEVELT
They walk, I walk.

They move on.

CUT TO:

DAWN--Barely breaking over the steaming jungle.

PATH--The men sit on the side of the trail as Wood rides past. Nash, Klaus and Wadsworth watch him go.

NASH
Something bad is gonna' happen.

KLAUS
If I should die--I want you to tell my mama how, if I did it well. If I didn't, you tell her a lie.

NASH
I intend to get through this. I'm looking for the right time and Pow--right in the foot.

WADSWORTH
Then you can die of the yellow jack on some filthy cot. No, Nash old boy--I think you've got about the same odds trying to be a hero.

NASH
You don't know. When it starts, you just don't know.

DOWN THE LINE--Goodrich and his squad watch Wood go by.

GOODRICH
Forthwith I believe we should be called
"Wood's Weary Walkers" instead of Rough
Riders--

NEVILLE
I wouldn't of joined if I'd a' thought
I was gonna' do all this walkin'.

GOODRICH
Cowhands never walk eh?

NEVILLE
It's the chief attraction of being
a cowhand.

CUT TO:

WOOD--ROOSEVELT--WHEELER--WILLIAM--PERSHING--They have a map
spread out on the ground.

WOOD
General Young's moving up the main
road--to our right. "Camino Real"--
leaving at dawn.

WHEELER
That means noon--won't do a bit of good.

WOOD
But his artillery could support us.

WHEELER
Won't need it--too thick--You go straight
up from here. Pershing, you swing wide
to the left--spread out in this stuff as
best you can--it opens up here at this
place, Las Guasimas. That's where
Mr. Funston killed that Spaniard. Damn
quick shot.

FUNSTON
Thank you Sir.

WHEELER
You keep your boys ahead and to the
right kinda' skulks it out.

FUNSTON
With your permission sir.

He leaves.

WHEELER

It's getting light--we should be on
em just when we can see our sights.
You ready boys?

He gets up--Roosevelt and Wood go back towards the troops.

DAVIS--MARSHALL--Watching.

DAVIS

Wheeler has gone beyond his authority.
The orders were to establish a perimeter
at Siboney and get organized.

MARSHALL

He's a two star, he doesn't have to
agree.

DAVIS

He's impetuous. Roosevelt's impetuous.
This could lead to some lively shooting.

CUT TO:

HAMILTON FISH--CAPRON--Fish scans ahead with binoculars,
trying to see through the jungle.

CAPRON

Those things are useless in this light.

FISH

Maybe a hint of movement.

ROOSEVELT--Down the trail, looks up at the two. O'Neil is at
his side.

ROOSEVELT

Look there, Captain. At Capron and
Fish--such fine specimens of Americans.
They look as if they were framed of steel.

They do--tall, silhouetted against the blue green--lean,
hardened, ready.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

How do you feel Captain?

O'NEIL

Scared--that's how I'm supposed to feel.

ROOSEVELT

Scared?

O'NEIL
 I'm so afraid, I'm ready to kill
 somebody.

They smile.

CAPRON--FISH--Topping off their magazines, putting the sixth round in their six-shooters.

CAPRON
 Give me two of your men Sergeant--
 I'll take point.

FISH
 Not without me--Irvine, Isbell, Culver--
 Come forward!

They do--half crouched. Irvine glares at TOM ISBELL, a Cherokee, who is smiling.

IRVINE
 Damit!

FISH
 What's the matter?

IRVINE
 He ate up all my tomatoes. Damn injun.

Isbell is proud of it.

FISH
 What's it matter you're liable to
 be killed today anyway--You need
 tomatoes--

CAPRON
 Let's move out.

They do.

ROOSEVELT--WOOD--Oversee the columns getting up, splitting into troops.

WOOD
 Take G, F and D and go to the right--
 Link up with the Cubans and I'll link
 with the 10th. Leave that horse.

He's gone--

ROOSEVELT
 Captain O'Neil--Proceed, bearing to
 the right.

He watches G Troop get up and move into the green, and soon they are gone as if the jungle swallowed them.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
My God--they've disappeared.

Davis comes up to his side.

DAVIS
So they have.

ROOSEVELT
I'll lead the others.

DAVIS
Could be dangerous.

ROOSEVELT
Danger, is an old and trusted friend.
(to the men)
D-F-Follow me--Spread out--One in the chamber, safety on.

Bolts are racked--safeties snapped.

CUT TO:

CAPRON--ISBELL--IRVINE--Moving up off the road like bird hunters--pushing aside leaves expecting something to flush. They come to the edge of a clearing on their right--a body lies in the road.

FISH
Must be Fightin' Joe's Spaniard.

CAPRON
Let's get across.

They run through the open and are soon in the foliage again.

ISBELL--Moving silently--Irvine and Capron behind. Suddenly the Indian stops--seems to lower, he sees:

An object in a tree--could it be a man?

CUT TO:

ROOSEVELT--DAVIS--moving with the Rough Riders.

ROOSEVELT
Listen, brush cuckoo or is it a thrush?

A cooing sound.

CUT TO:

INDIAN BOB--Advancing before O'Neil.

WADSWORTH--He stops, looks at a leaf in front of his face--notices it's been broken--feels the break for moisture--nods yes.

CUT TO:

ISBELL--Looking at the object, then down to where Fish and Culver move on the road. The object becomes a man--a glinting barrel protrudes.

OVER HIS SIGHTS--He fires, the man stiffens and clutches at the tree, clumsily falling out.

JUNGLE--A million birds squawk and cry, many fly.

ISBELL--Hears a ZZZZZ--EUUU--over his head then Thwak--Chug--Chug--three times he's hit in rapid succession followed by the reports. He turns around and falls.

FISH--The jungle is suddenly alive with whizzing hornets that plop through trees and whine and crack. He sees figures ahead. He drops to the kneeling position, fires twice rapidly--the figures vanish. Culver is prone.

CULVER

I got one!

He gets up.

FISH

You've got a good place there.

Fish leans over to see where he was looking--fires once--reaches for his belt--Chug--Thwock! Fish stiffens straight up.

FISH (CONT'D)

I'm badly wounded!

Blood comes from his nose and mouth. Culver grabs at his chest.

CULVER

So am I!

Fish sinks to sitting.

FISH
The bullet hit both of us.

He feels under his arms on both sides, his fingers are bloody.

FISH (CONT'D)
Give me your canteen.

Culver hands it to him.

FISH (CONT'D)
Are you alright?

He slides back, dead, leaving Culver to stare at him.

CUT TO:

ROOSEVELT--Moving ahead with K Troop, suddenly there's a sound like swarms of insects flying over--leaves fall, twigs snap--pulp from bullet holes splatter, little sonic cracks as sheets of bullets fly over. Roosevelt doesn't duck, but listens as if the sound is some new kind of wildlife.

ROOSEVELT
Press on!

Roosevelt advances himself, his favorite silver single action in his hand--but he's forgotten that he still wears a saber--he goes a few steps and falls clumsily into the tall grass, out of sight.

ROUGH RIDER
Colonel!

ROOSEVELT
Damn.

He gets up, holding the saber in place with his right hand, pistol in his left--not even embarrassed.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
Steady boys--Advance in rushes.

CUT TO:

CAPRON--IRVINE--Prone, firing as fast as they can work the bolts. A man screams ahead of them and drops--another thrashes like a caught animal.

IRVINE
Can you see 'em Sir?

CAPRON
Whatever I see--I hit!

The Indian Tom Isbell stands up--right next to them. He is splotched with blood--it runs down his face and arms.

ISBELL
I'm shot all to hell--Can I go in Sir?

CAPRON
Yes--Stay down!

He just walks towards the rear.

WOOD--Moving up towards Capron with Neville, Luna and Goodrich. Isbell walks by, as he does, he's hit again--goes down--gets up.

ISBELL
I'm going in. I've had enough.

He walks towards the rear--Wood and the others reach Capron--drop flat.

WOOD
Ambush?

CAPRON
I think we just ran into a mess of `em Sir. Sergeant Fish is dead.

Wood looks over--sees Fish's feet ahead. He sees two shadow figures moving through the jungle to their right, grabs Neville, Goodrich.

WOOD
There! Trying to flank us. Hold sure--

Goodrich squeezes the shot off like in training. Neville hesitates. Goodrich runs the bolt--shoots the second man, then Neville fires.

NEVILLE
We got `em!

GOODRICH
We did.

Wood looks over the situation.

WOOD
I'm going to reinforce here with A Company--Don't advance until they

get here.

CAPRON

Yes Sir.

Wood scurries back, cool as ice.

CUT TO:

WHEELER--On this horse with the 10th Cavalry. He rides towards Pershing. The horse goes down in a tangle of brush. Bullets whine and rip overhead. His son is on him instantly, off his own horse, helping him up.

PERSHING

Is he all right?

WHEELER

It ain't the first time--Advance and link up with Wood. Bust into them.

He mounts the horse his son gave him and rides to the rear.

WHEELER (CONT'D)

Where the hell is Young? Unreliable!

He disappears into the jungle.

CUT TO:

G TROOP--Spread out, moving to the right through heavy foliage. They come to a clearing--see men on the other side--straw hats, white uniforms. Bardshar fires, a man drops. Klaus, Wadsworth, Indian Bob--they all fire--screaming.

VOICE

Hold it! For God's sake No!
Hold it!

O'Neil pushes forward through the clearing.

O'NEIL

Follow me.

Funston comes out of the other side--

FUNSTON

You fired on us!

O'NEIL

Can't take it back--
(to men)
Keep going--Look ahead.

They pass a writhing, wounded Cuban and a dead one--his eyes wide open staring up at the trees, bugs already crawling on him.

CASTILLO

Keep going don't look at him.

Chug! A bullet hits a man, he drops like a sack, no sound, no movement. Chug! Another holds his hip--turns around--and tries to walk back, falls and starts screaming. Wadsworth looks at the dead Cuban.

KLAUS

Did I kill him?

NASH

Indian Bob got him.

CASTILLO

Keep going!

WADSWORTH (to no one)

I fired.

He presses on.

CUT TO:

LAWTON--YOUNG--Overlooking regular columns moving at the double down a jungle road.

YOUNG

I thought the regular infantry was supposed to lead any advance?

LAWTON

Wheeler pushed out there without informing me and I could not stop him. The record will show that I tried.

WOOD--MARSHALL--Crouching with Brodie's men as they advance. Sgt. Polk, the regular staff sergeant, is lagging behind.

ROUGH RIDER

I can't see the goddamned bastards.

OTHER ROUGH RIDER

Son's of bitches!

WOOD

Don't curse boys--Shoot.

He is upright, undisturbed as the trees quiver and the air sings with metal. Chug--Thwack! Brodie goes down, blood splattering from his arm.

BRODIE
Oh Lord look at me.

Polk has blood flecked on him. He turns and runs.

POLK
The Colonel's dead! Oh My God--!

He runs headlong past the Rough Riders. One spits at him.

CUT TO:

ROOSEVELT--Can see nothing ahead, he leans against a tree.

ROOSEVELT
Keep firing lads.

ROUGH RIDER
At what Colonel--

Roosevelt sees Davis, who comes up next to him. Splat! A bullet goes through the tree sending bark and pulp into Roosevelt's glasses. He pulls them off and rips a new pair out of his uniform--cleans out his eyes.

DAVIS
Can you see Theodore?

ROOSEVELT
Yes, of course.

He sees Kane and Tiffany with their sections dragging the Colt potato digger machine guns.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
Good--Boys--Bring those guns to bear--
Set up here and lay down a barrage!

KANE
At what Sir?

DAVIS
He's right, we might hit our own.

Roosevelt gets up--moves ahead--trips on the saber again--calmly pulls it out.

ROOSEVELT
Can you hold this Davis?

He hands it to Davis.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
Press on!

CUT TO:

CAPRON--Putting new cartridges in his magazine--Whup! He's shot through the top of his shoulder--the bullet blowing out through his side. He shivers and sinks down.

GOODRICH
Captain!

Chuck! Irvine's hat flies off with some of his head. He kicks and thrashes.

NEVILLE
Bastards--Goddamned Mexicans.

He gets to a kneeling position. Blat! Chug! A bullet goes through the leg, another takes off two fingers. He screams. Goodrich grabs him--fires once.

CAPRON
Fall back Goodrich! Get reinforcements!

Goodrich retreats--carrying Neville, who screams and curses. They quickly encounter Roosevelt, Davis, Kane, Tiffany, and others.

NEVILLE
They killed my Captain! You hear me--they killed my Captain! Goddamn Mexicans!

Goodrich hands Neville to others.

KANE
You alright old boy?

ROOSEVELT
What's up here Goodrich?

GOODRICH
Spaniards Sir, lots of 'em. They killed Hamilton--Sergeant Fish Sir.

ROOSEVELT
You want to go back at them?

GOODRICH
Yes Sir.

ROOSEVELT
Spread out damn it--Advance in rushes.

Davis drops the saber and picks up Neville's rifle, works the bolt--Kane hands him a handful of ammo. Looks back at Tiffany.

KANE
Leave those guns--Let's take it to them.

He advances, rifle in hand.

ROOSEVELT
Tie in on the right--Move the right!

They advance, fire, drop--fire advance--a body falls from a tree--others break and run in front of them.

CUT TO:

WHEELER--Riding headlong through the rear ranks. Polk sees him.

POLK
Colonel Wood is dead! They've been ambushed! They're all dying!

WHEELER
Damn it.

He rides past him. Polk continues to the rear.

CUT TO:

DAVIS--On the edge of the formation, he can see across a ravine--he aims and fires.

DAVIS
Colonel! Colonel Roosevelt! Over here!

Roosevelt rushes over with Kane, Tiffany, and Eli.

ROOSEVLET
What is it man?

DAVIS
You can see their hats Sir--See them?

Sure enough--the hats bob about across the ravine. They appear to be moving position, and don't know they've been seen--about twenty of them.

ROOSEVELT
Make it count boys.

KANE
Sitting position--Use your sling.

He gets into the loop as does Tiffany. Eli leans against a tree.

KANE
Shoot below the hat--

He fires--a hat flies off--a thwack! It echoes back. Tiffany fires--a hat disappears. Eli fires, another hat flies--there's screaming.

ROOSEVELT
Shoot the front of the group Woodbury!
Sergeant Tiffany shoot the back!

Eli fires again--thwock!-- a meaty wet sound. They blast away rapidly--a few more hats go down. Suddenly there is no one left to shoot at. Moaning and thrashing sounds come from the bushes. A body crashes down into the ravine. Tiffany shoots it.

DAVIS
I believe I got one too Colonel.

ROOSEVELT
Good! Where'd you put my saber, man?

DAVIS
Dreadful, must have dropped it.

ROOSEVELT
Not to mind--Excellent work here--
Hasten forward.

He leads on.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
Follow me boys!

CUT TO:

LAWTON--STAFF--Standing around Sgt. Polk. Lawton walks away.

LAWTON
I want your men to be ready to move up there at once. General Young will have to be informed--

WHEELER
Informed of what?

He looks up to see Wheeler on a sweaty horse, his son at his side.

LAWTON
Colonel Wood is dead and his command ambushed and surrounded.

WHEELER
Bull puckee! I just left Colonel Wood, and his boys are kicking hell out of them Federals--

LAWTON
Federals?

WILLIAM WHEELER
Spaniards Sir.

LAWTON (indicating Polk)
This man just reported it.

WHEELER
Saw that son of a bitch runnin' with his tail between his legs. I've seen Wood since--Now listen up! Them damn Yankee rifles don't make any smoke so the bastards are hard to find--but we're finding 'em and we're killing 'em. We are advancing. Get your bluebelly infantry up from that goddamn beach and tie in with our right and we'll turn the flank on those bastards and get the fox into the henhouse!

He turns without further comment.

WHEELER (CONT'D)
C'mon son, let's get back in it.

CUT TO:

ROOSEVELT--OTHERS--Come up on Wood. Roosevelt rushes over--Wood stands behind a tree, but doesn't do anything else for cover. Roosevelt stands in the open. Leaves and twigs snap over him. Wheeler casually pulls him around out of line, as if it would do good.

ROOSEVELT
We've pasted a bunch of them in the ravine over there and driven 'em out. But I can't seem to make contact with

Capron.

WOOD
Here's Capron.

He nods. Roosevelt sees Capron leaned up against a tree, white, his shirt off, his wounds bound but bloody. Wood puts his hand on Roosevelt's shoulder--shakes his head. Roosevelt goes over to him, crouches down--a medical orderly looks on--it is obvious the man is dying.

ROOSEVELT
How're you feeling Captain?

CAPRON
Don't bother about me Colonel, I'll be fine.

There's nothing either can say. Bullets are flying. Roosevelt rushes back to Wood.

WOOD
Take Brodie's command, link up with the Buffalo Soldiers. I'll use your people here--

ROOSEVELT
Who's that?

He points to feet--protruding from a bush.

WOOD
Fish--first man hit.

ROOSEVELT
My God, his poor mother. We advance?

WOOD
Advance--

Roosevelt rushes off with Kane, Tiffany and Davis. Marshall picks up his pad and rushes after them.

CUT TO:

O'NEIL--Pushing ahead with Indian Bob on point. Wadsworth, Klaus and others follow--Nash towards the rear. They push through into a swamp.

On a rise to the left, are Spaniards in a loose column. Both groups see each other and freeze. O'Neil snap shoots a man, who drops like a sack--all the others, both sides, open up a hot fire--everyone missing.

O'NEIL

High--You're high! Shoot 'em in
the crotch!

He kneels and coolly drops another. Indian Bob fires and one goes down. A man next to him is hit.

MAN

Oh no--Mamma! --No!

He falls kicking and crying. Wadsworth looks at him, frozen. A bullet takes his hat off--grazing his skull. He staggers, shakes his head, puts his hand up--looks at the blood. Klaus is firing blindly from the ground. The Spaniards have crouched and pulled back.

NASH--He looks around as a bullet whops into meat. A man jerks and falls, gets up again and fires, then falls. Bullets rip through trees, the brush around him. He turns and runs to the right, away from the fire.

WADSWORTH--Hits the dirt--cheeks his rifle. A man pops up to shoot from across the bank. Wadsworth fires and the man flies back, clearly hit and dead. It happens so quickly, he doesn't know how to react.

O'NEIL

Get up--Move to the right. Get up!

CASTILLO

To the right--Keep moving!

BARDSHAR (O.S.)

To the right!

CUT TO:

NASH--Running headlong--ready to throw his rifle--he's scared in blind panic. Suddenly ZZZEUUU--and a whole swarm, Chug! He screams and goes down. A clean hole is in his calf--it's starting to bleed. A wisp of smoke comes up from the exit hole in his leggings, which is beginning to stain darkly. He yelps with burning pain. Zlap! Another round grazes through his side, on his ribs--ripping open the shirt--he grabs at it. Another round punctures the tree above his head. He looks up. A Spanish trench line is at right angles to him, filled with men. He has unwittingly turned their flank. More trenches can be seen in the open, extending away from him. A Spanish sniper and a spotter stand on the embankment and fire at him again. The sniper reaches into his web-belt for a Mauser stripper clip. Nash fumbles for his rifle--pulls it up and fires wildly at them. He racks the bolt and fires again and again until the weapon is empty. He hasn't hit them, but it has driven them to cover. He stops his

moaning and pulls rounds from his belt. Suddenly Indian Bob flops down next to him, followed by Wadsworth, Castillo and O'Neil. All round him, G Troop hits the ground prone or go into sitting positions. Those who can, use their slings, others lean barrels against trees.

OLD COWHAND--Who had the four notches, uses a crude shooting stick.

O'NEIL--Doesn't have to order fire, it starts spontaneously. He raises and fires too. A deadly fusillade of well aimed shots tears into the Spanish from the side. Men fall, most get up and run.

O'NEIL
Raise to 300 to get the far
trenches!

Men adjust sights--reload magazines. All the while, a steady fire is pouring into the Spanish positions. The straw hatted enemy return fire sporadically, but they are outflanked!

CUT TO:

ROOSEVELT--Busting out of the jungle leading his troops, pistol in hand. Before him is a ranch house, fortified. Roosevelt looks to his left--someone is waving. It is a black trooper of Pershing's Cavalry. Pershing himself emerges about twenty yards away.

ROOSEVELT (yelling)
Their fire has slackened. I say we
assault them Lieutenant.

PERSHING
Can't hear you Colonel!

ROOSEVELT
Charge!

Pershing nods--steps forward, a wave of Buffalo Soldiers comes out of the trees firing, dropping down covering, attacking. Roosevelt runs forward. The Rough Riders surge around him firing and moving like they've been trained.

RANCH HOUSE--The Spanish immediately abandon the position, falling back rapidly.

ROOSEVELT--Sees a trooper buckle up and go down. He goes to him and kneels. Kane stops.

ROOSEVELT
Keep going Kane, press on! I'll
be with you shortly.

(looks at the man)
Where did it get you boy?

MAN
Through the bowels--I'm done for.

ROOSEVELT
I'm sorry--We can't stop.

MAN
If I could have my canteen and rifle.

ROOSEVELT
Certainly Sir--Here's your carbine
and please make use of my canteen.

He hands it to him--looks once more and rushes on. The leading elements are almost at the ranch house, and Roosevelt hurries to catch up to them.

DAVIS--Crouches next to the wounded man.

DAVIS
Who are you Trooper?

MAN
Harry Hefues, of Gallup New Mexico.
Tell my folks how this came to pass.

Davis writes feverishly.

CUT TO:

MAIN ROAD--Still under fire--but the Spanish are retreating ahead. A RIDER in blue gallops up to Wheeler, his son is firing from the saddle.

OFFICER
General Young presents his compliments
Sir, and wishes you to know that he and
Colonel Wood's Rough Riders have turned
the right flank--

WHEELER
Hallolulya! Hosanna! God Damn!

OFFICER
The Spanish are retreating all along
the line.

WHEELER
Praise the Lord--We've got them damn
Yankees on the run now!

OFFICER

They're falling back on prepared positions Sir.

WHEELER

Don't spoil it boy--Don't spoil it. We'll lick 'em tomorrow! Hot damn!

He turns his horse as the Officer leaves, quite pleased with himself. He finds himself staring down at a tall young man in a soiled Panama suit--Crane.

WHEELER

What the hell are you doin' here son? Why ain't you with the other correspondents?

CRANE

They don't like my company Sir and I slept late.

WHEELER

What's wrong with you?

CRANE

I'm a narcotics user and a drunk and I don't give a damn.

WHEELER

Yes--well--then good luck to you son. Good luck damn it.

He turns and rides up the road. Crane follows.

RANCH HOUSE--Roosevelt busts through with his men and the Buffalo Soldiers. Only the Spanish dead are left, and some moaning, wounded. Roosevelt, pistol ready, comes around the other side to find Wood standing calmly, his men in line, firing at the far retreating Spanish.

ROOSEVELT

Colonel Wood Sir.

WOOD

Yes Theodore.

ROOSEVELT

How did you get here Sir?

WOOD

I attacked like you--Good job Theodore-- It was an important position. It seemed O'Neil turned the flank. Damn fine work.

ROOSEVELT
Bully good work--Yes.

WOOD
Now get your men down over there, tie up with Pershing's Buffalo Soldiers and brace for a counterattack.

ROOSEVELT
Yes Sir.

He rushes off. Luna picks up a Mauser rifle.

WOOD
Mauser--7 millimeter--the Germans make a damnable fine rifle--better than ours.

Luna hands it to him. He goes to a window and sees Roosevelt in the open organizing his lines. Wood notices something and raises the rifle--holds steady and fires at a tree. A man falls out behind Roosevelt, who is oblivious and unaware. Luna hears the shot, but thinks Wood is only testing the weapon.

WOOD
Check the map--We'll move up to El Poso Hill and let the infantry dig in. See what General Wheeler has in mind.

LUNA
Yes Sir.

CUT TO:

WADSWORTH--Standing in a trench looking at a dead Spaniard, a young handsome man, much like himself. The man is slumped, his hand still grasping his rifle that lays on the parapet. A heroic tableau. The man is cleanly shot through one eye, otherwise he is untouched. Wadsworth leans over and vomits.

GOODRICH
Craig! Get over here and lend us a hand.

Several men, including Indian Bob and Klaus, are holding Nash. Wadsworth walks over to them.

GOODRICH (CONT'D)
You did well Henry--you'll be mentioned in dispatches.

KLAUS
Will they give him a medal?

GOODRICH

Hard to say--a lot of men deserve something today. Poor Fish--hard to say.

WADSWORTH

Can you walk Henry?

NASH

I don't think so. It's all over for me.

Goodrich walks away, attending to others.

WADSWORTH

It's what you wanted isn't it?

NASH

I guess so--I guess I'm a lucky son of a bitch. Always have been.

KLAUS

You are wounded Craig.

Wadsworth puts his hand to his head.

WADSWORTH

So I am--it doesn't even hurt.

KLAUS

You come with us--Bob you stay here.

INDIAN BOB

Sure--Maybe we fight some more.

CUT TO:

AFTERNOON--The sun is low, the light filters through the trees and the birds chirp as if nothing had happened. The war, for the moment, has stopped and seems far away. Under an open tent in a shadowed glade sits William Randolph Hearst. He is typing at a table. Frederick Remington is painting something. Armed men sit around them.

HEARST (V.O.)

Today in this fetid jungle, America met its first test. American boys from all walks of life, all colors, met the trained, disciplined, brutish soldiers of an old European power and drove them back.

Remington is painting men washing in a stream, some naked, some too tired to undress.

Horses pull a field piece across a ford. The men are quiet--occasional laughter drifts by.

CLOSE WADSWORTH--Sitting with his boots off in the stream, sloping water on his bare chest. He stares out at nothing, his head bandaged under his hat. Crane walks over and sits down.

CRANE

What's your name Trooper?

WADSWORTH

Wadsworth, Craig--

CRANE

The Wadsworth?

WADSWORTH

For what it's worth.

CRANE

You're wounded.

WADSWORTH

A "Red Badge of Courage". Hardly so--not like your book old man. I'd have run if I had the chance.

CRANE

Why didn't you?

WADSWORTH

They were watching--my fellows that is. They didn't run.

CRANE

Don't you think they wanted to?

WADSWORTH

One did, but now he's a hero. Others never thought of it--and some are dead. It's funny how strong is the desire to live.

He turns and looks up at Crane.

CRANE

Cigarillo old boy?

WADSWORTH

I killed a man--maybe two. I never

saw for sure--but I know.

CRANE
You may have missed.

WADSWORTH
No, I didn't miss--I'm too fine an athlete and now I'm a murderer. I feel sick with guilt--dirty, foul. There's nothing manly about it.

CRANE
You think too much Wadsworth, try getting drunk. All of us are guilty, you're not special.

WADSWORTH
No, you're right and I'll get what's coming to me.

CRANE
We all do.

VOICE
Wadsworth!

He looks up--Tiffany, Goodrich, Kane.

KANE
Come along Craig--We've something to do.

He picks up his boots.

CUT TO:

TENT--Wood and Wheeler sit smoking. Roosevelt stands. They are relaxed, like hikers who've come home from a strenuous climb, but feel the vitality of it.

WOOD
You did well today Theodore.

ROOSEVELT
No Sir--I'm not a regular soldier, I was lost. But you Sir, you made sense of it.

WHEELER
We were all lost--that's the darned truth of it. Shot our way out.

WOOD
We were ambushed--like rank amateurs. If those had been Apaches, we'd have

been cut off and killed one by one.
I should know better, but I was nervous,
uncertain.

ROOSEVELT
I hardly could call your actions
uncertain.

WOOD
You were the only one who seemed
confident Theodore--By the way, what's
that I hear about your sword?

ROOSEVELT (laughing)
Tripped over it. Twice--gave it to
Davis--he mercifully lost it.

They laugh.

WHEELER
Don't mention that ambush story again.
It was a probe and combined assault.
Don't want these Yankee generals to
have anything on us.

They laugh again.

VITAGRAPH MEN--Sitting off to the side watching the officers.
Between them are the bodies of Capron and Fish laying out in
the open.

VITAGRAPH MAN 1
Callous isn't it-laughing while poor
Capron and Fish lay here?

VITAGRAPH MAN 2
Why don't you get a picture?

The four New Yorkers walk up. A burial detail is taking the
other bodies away one by one. Men are digging. A CORPORAL
oversees them.

KANE
Corporal--We'd like to have Sergeant Fish.

CORPORAL
He was your pal wasn't he?

KANE
Yes. He was our chum.

CORPORAL
I'm mighty sorry.

KANE

Get something to wrap him in Sergeant.
Tiffany--and you two, get some
shovels--I'll find a suitable place.

CUT TO:

DAY--RAIN--Pouring down on the graves with crosses identifying Capron, Fish, Irvine, etc. Land crabs scuttle about in the deluge. Beyond are the officer's tents. Wagons and artillery move through the mud.

WHEELER'S TENT--A very cross General Lawton stands with his hands on his hips, as Wheeler comes from around the tent to join him.

WHEELER

This can't be said in front of others?

LAWTON

No Sir, it can not. You rushed off, and damn near caused a great disaster. Volunteer General Wheeler! And I not only disapprove of your actions, I am appalled by them!

WHEELER

You may be Regular Army, General, but I'm the senior officer ashore. And as such, I was in my rights to attack. In fact, I'd attack them today if your people had the ability to keep me supplied. We have no food.

LAWTON

Well, General, you won't be the senior officer much longer. I'm happy to report that General Shafter is feeling much better and will be on the ground shortly. Then we will see who advances and who supports. Good day Sir.

Lawton storms off, out of camera. Wheeler watches him go.

WHEELER

Hey, how 'bout some lunch?
(then, less loudly, but still
with enough volume to be heard)
I found a mango this morning!

Wheeler's son appears and hurries to his father.

WILLIAM WHEELER

Good God Father, what was that
all about?

WHEELER

We were just talkin'

DAY--COMMISSARY TENT--The rain has stopped. All manner of supply crates are piled high as Roosevelt and Kane enter the big tent. Army clerks work away, so very busy with a mountain of paperwork. A counter has been set up--Roosevelt and Kane step up to it. An officious man, the COMMISSARY, turns around and comes to the counter.

ROOSEVELT

My good fellow, my men are getting very hungry at the front and there's a rumor going 'round that you've got eleven hundred pounds of beans just sitting here. May I have them Sir?

COMMISSARY

Are the beans for officers?

ROOSEVELT

For the men.

COMMISSARY

Then I can't give them to you. Here.
(picking up a manual from the desk
and finding a page)
Under sub-section B of article 4--beans
are only available to officers.

KANE

Are you out of your mind Sir?

ROOSEVELT

No, he's right. Come along Lieutenant.

Kane follows Roosevelt out. The Commissary gloats.

EXT. COMMISSARY TENT--Roosevelt exits the tent followed by Kane.

KANE

Let's just take the confounded beans!
I'll shoot any man who tries to stop me!

ROOSEVELT

Calm down, Woodbury. I've spent years in Washington. This is how the government works. Besides, stealing is a sin.

Now come along.

Roosevelt heads for the tent.

KANE
Back inside?

ROOSEVELT
Why yes. That's where the beans are.

INT. COMMISSARY TENT--Roosevelt and Kane reenter. The Commissary is naturally surprised to see them.

ROOSEVELT
How do you do Sir? I'm here to requisition eleven hundred pounds of beans for my officers.

COMMISSARY
But you were just in here a second ago asking for beans for your men.

ROOSEVELT
Yes Sir. But that was then. This is now.

COMMISSARY
Your officers can't eat eleven hundred pounds of beans Colonel.

ROOSEVELT
No?
(the friendly smile disappears)
How would you know what my officers can eat? Now, give me the beeeans.
I think you know who I am.

COMMISSARY
How will they be paid for?

ROOSEVELT
I'll sign for it.

COMMISSARY
I'm not sure I can do that.

ROOSEVELT
Find a way.

COMMISSARY (pause)
All right. But I must tell you the paperwork on this will be very complicated.

"Teeth-adore" snaps him the trademark grin. Kane smiles too.

MUSIC: A drum and bugle fanfare overlaps the sound track of this scene to announce the great importance of what is to come next:

CUT TO:

PROCESSION OF OFFICERS--Escorting General Shafter, who sits in a wagon sweltering and uncomfortable in the heat.

EL POSO HILL--Men assist General Shafter onto a mule, with some difficulty, so that he can get up the hill.

TENT--EL POSO--An equal number of men help General Shafter off the beast.

GENERAL SHAFTER--Sitting in a large chair, obviously he is not going to move--maps are brought to him. Wheeler looks through field glasses. He too is sweating.

WHEELER

The most northern point of their defense is the village of El Caney--see it?

SHAFTER

I can't see a damn thing from here.

WHEELER

Stretching south are the San Juan Heights--

SHAFTER

I'll take your word for it.

WHEELER

It's all fortified--rifle pits. Those damn German guns.

WILLIAM WHEELER

Krupp batteries and Maxim rapid fire guns Sir. We believe they are manned by German advisors.

SHAFTER

You don't say--Germans? Have you proof?

WILLIAM WHEELER

Major Funston says they are, Sir. He's the liaison to the insurrectos. Looks like German work--barbed wire, rifle pits, interlocking fields of fire.

SHAFTER

They seem to want to make it unpleasant.
They seem to want to fight.

WHEELER

They'll fight.

He mops his brow.

SHAFTER

What do you suggest Lawton?

LAWTON

More artillery and a broad assault--
Artillery--that's the only answer.

YOUNG

"God is on the side of those with
the most cannon."

WILLIAM WHEELER

Napoleon at Marengo.

WHEELER

Aw shut up--You ain't Napoleon General.
And you General have got malaria to
contend with. You better do something
soon or we'll die in this place.

SHAFTER

Are you all right Joe?

LAWTON

The General appears to be delirious,
but that has never stopped him before.

YOUNG

But he's right--We must assault.

Wheeler sits down.

SHAFTER

There's a relief column from Havana
three days out--Now is the time while
this infernal rain has stopped.

Wheeler is obviously sick.

WILLIAM WHEELER

Are you All right Sir?

WHEELER

Hell no--damn it--

SHAFTER

Get him to the hospital before he
infests us--And Young--You and
Lawton draw up a plan.

LAWTON

We took the liberty already Sir.

Wheeler is helped from the tent by his son.

WHEELER

Have Wood take over the brigade.

YOUNG

Who'll take HIS regiment?

WHEELER

Roosevelt!

CUT TO:

NIGHT--HOSPITAL TENT--Neville writhes and screams in delirium, saying things that make no sense. Nash throws open the flap of his tent to look out, as two MEDICAL ORDERLIES approach.

ORDERLY

Malaria? He don't respond to quinine.

OTHER ORDERLY

Better hope it's malaria.

ORDERLY

Why, you think it's Yellow Jack?

OTHER ORDERLY

Just a matter of time.

They walk away. Neville continues to writhe. Nash looks back in his tent--everything smells of putrefaction and formaldehyde. Dirty bottles of disinfectant and soiled clothes hang from tent poles. Another wounded man has his face bandaged up. He appears dead. A BLACK SOLDIER stares at Nash.

NEVILLE (deliriously screaming)

You take the money Henry! All that's left!

BUFFALO SOLDIER

What's that fellas' sayin'?

NASH

Nothin'--He's crazy--Got the fever.

BUFFALO SOLDIER

They're gettin' ready soon--Say that
 General Wheeler got the fever. Lotta'
 horses pullin' through this mud. They're
 gettin' ready again. Better do it for
 the Yellow Jack comes to visit.

Nash hears something, looks down and sees that a huge land crab has crawled up to his cot. He is disgusted by it, grabs a tent stake that he's obviously used before, and smashes the thing. It scatters away.

NASH

Damn things--One was eatin' on my
 leg before.

BUFFALO SOLDIER

It's the smell--they likes the smell.

Neville screams again.

NEVILLE (O.S.)

I ain't ever done nothin' to be hanged
 for! God help me!

His moans trail off--

BUFFALO SOLDIER

He got the Yellow Jack--I don't care
 what they say. We gonna' get it too.

NASH

Quit talkin' like that.

BUFFALO SOLDIER

There's gonna' be a battle tomorrow.
 Lotta' boys cryin' for their mama.
 Ain't it funny that a growed man when
 he's dyin' cries for his wife or mama.
 Don't matter how brave or what he done.
 He's sweet again like a little 'chile.

CUT TO:

ROOSEVELT--Standing before a campfire. Rough Riders sit around--some come out of their pup tents--dirty, wet--but eager.

ROOSEVELT

Tomorrow will be our crowded hour.
 The time is at hand boys. The battle
 of San Juan is about to begin and with
 it, the outcome of this war. We must

lick the Spaniard tomorrow in a stand up fight. No holds barred. On his ground--If we can do that--We become a nation to be counted.

ROUGH RIDER
What if they lick us?

ROOSEVELT
Then we'll be pushed into the sea. The Cuban people will be slaughtered or put into reconcentrado camps. Their women raped--bodies tossed up and caught on bayonets. Everything for which we stand will be laughed at by the German Kaiser and his Spanish lackeys.

INDIAN ROUGH RIDER
What the hell is it we stand for anyway?

CRANE
Profit--market share--making the world safe for purchase.

ROOSEVELT
Wait a minute Crane--It's easy to say that. But the fact remains that no one forced us to come here. We came to join the fight of the little man against the booted foot of tyranny. We as a people respond to the call of the oppressed. Why? Because we are free men, and bullies get our hackles up. You can be cynical Sir--You can criticize, but you don't count.

He turns towards him.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
It is the doer of deed who matters in battle. Whether marked by failure or success. He, in the arena is the one who is watched.

He turns back to the others.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
You and I--we know the great devotions, the great enthusiasms--not the cynic who looks on and says how the fight should be fought. The 20th Century looms before us boys. If we are to win our place--it will not be without

hazard.

O'Neil stands up.

O'NEIL
For my part Sir--I make a toast to my officers--May they be killed, wounded or promoted.

He holds up his canteen. Bardshar stands up.

BARDSHAR
For the regiment--The rest of us--
The same.

They howl and wave their canteens.

CRANE--Walks over to Davis, who looks down his nose at him.

CRANE
Does this always happen?

DAVIS
Yes--as far back as Troy--the men are either gods or frauds--some will be neither--they will be dead. But tomorrow will tell--You can be sure of that.

CUT TO:

DAWN--ROAD--Through the jungle, muddy, slippery. The regular infantry moves down in close columns. A Gatling gun and crew, with their horses, are held up. The Lieutenant in charge of the gun, LIEUTENANT PARKER, argues to no avail as the infantry plods ahead. Davis listens to the argument and walks across to Marshall and Crane.

DAVIS
Well we're out nice and early today.

CRANE
I just stayed up all night.

DAVIS
Well you better watch yourself. It's going to get hot.

CRANE
Thank you for your concern Mr. Davis--
I've brought along some--water--

He pats a canteen.

DAVIS

Lawton says he'll take El Caney by
nine o'clock.

MARSHALL

Then the whole line advances on the
heights?

DAVIS

That's how it's planned.

CRANE

Not terribly imaginative. Why not
march around their flank?

DAVIS

The sea, old man--is on the flank--

MARSHALL

And the jungle the other.

CRANE

It'll be a bloodbath.

DAVIS

Well, that's what you came to see.

He walks off down the road.

CRANE

Don't you get the feeling that he
really likes me?

MARSHALL

He just doesn't know you.

He turns, shakes Crane's hand.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Good luck Stephan--Use some common
sense so that we can raise the devil
in Santiago. Rum and señoritas to
the survivors--

CRANE

I shall look forward to it Sir.

CUT TO:

ROOSEVELT--On his horse "Little Texas", leading the advanced
troop down a jungle track. So far, all is quiet. They can't
see the hills from here. He looks to his left. In between
trees, he can make out another column of infantry marching in

close order with a band playing "When Johnny Comes Marching Home".

ROOSEVELT
Spread out--five yard intervals.

CASTILLO
Five yard intervals! Keep it that way.

O'NEIL--Tense in the jungle, looks back over his men.

CUT TO:

WHEELER'S TENT--Wheeler is delirious, talking and writhing. His son puts a wet towel over his forehead. The sound of artillery echoes back.

CUT TO:

LAWTON'S COLUMN--Off to the side of the trail. In a clearing, an observation balloon is being readied.

LAWTON
Raise the balloon.

A captain signals--two officers climb into the basket. The balloon ascends over the lines of marching men.

CUT TO:

SAN JUAN HILL--BLOCKHOUSE--The Spanish Commander watches the balloon rising from the far trees. Next to him is a German Officer in peaked cap carrying a riding crop. He speaks in Spanish to the Commander, then orders two other Germans with long optical range-finders forward. These men are in pickelhelms. They converse with the Officer in German, all the while the balloon rises.

CUT TO:

KETTLE HILL--In front of San Juan. A Spanish crew and German advisor adjust the elevation on a Maxim machine gun. Troops in rifle pits raise the sliding sights on their Mausers. Boxes of stripper clips are set between every other man.

CUT TO:

SHAFTER--Sitting under an umbrella on El Poso Hill. His staff is around him--all looking through field glasses.

CUT TO:

TREES--Under Kettle Hill--Wood and the 10th Cavalry are already there. The troopers lie down at the tree line. An

artillery battery is moved up next to Wood--two three inch Hotchkiss guns.

WOOD

Tell Lieutenant Grimes he may begin the preparatory barrage.

ARTILLERY BATTERY--Fires--a large gout of white smoke blasts out. The guns are quickly reloaded.

CUT TO:

SAN JUAN HILL--The German Officer notes the clouds of white smoke. The ranging team takes the distance. The Officer turns as a shell whistles over. He sees:

BATTERIES--On the reverse slope--Krupp Guns manned by Spaniards with German advisors. The Germans call out the range, not even bothering to do it in Spanish.

CUT TO:

ROOSEVELT--Comes out of the tree line behind Wood--rides up. His men are dispersed further back behind a ditch-bank. Lieutenant Grimes' battery fires away, making a few hits around the blockhouse on San Juan. Wood wears new General's stars on his collar.

ROOSEVELT

The regiment is forming in position Sir.

WOOD

Lawton and Young should be taking El Caney by now. They'll turn the flank of the heights, and then we will assault frontally.

ROOSEVELT

You have my word Sir that my regiment shall not embarrass you. Put us in the thick of it.

WOOD

I'm sure your men would not share your enthusiasm. Colonel, a good commander tries to accomplish his mission with the least amount of loss. Glory be damned. See that you remember it.

ROOSEVELT

I shall Sir.

His face slackens--he sets his jaw, swallows.

WOOD
Good luck Colonel.

Wood reaches into his pocket and pulls out his full colonel's epaulets.

WOOD (CONT'D)
These are yours now. Do them honor.

He turns his horse and rides back towards his men. Davis runs up beside him.

DAVIS
I understand Colonel Wood is replacing Wheeler.

ROOSEVELT
It's General Wood now.

DAVIS
Then who is replacing him?

ROOSEVELT
I am.

DAVIS
Wonderful, old man! That's front page news, Roosevelt's Rough Riders--finally.

Roosevelt rides off not very interested. Marshall comes up.

MARSHALL
Seems aloof today--even to you.

DAVIS
I suppose a man would have much on his mind on a day like this.

MARSHALL
So far it's a bust.

CLOSE WOOD--GRIMES' BATTERY--Wood has ridden his horse up to the battery. Davis comes up.

WOOD
Concentrate on the near blockhouse--
You haven't touched it.

GRIMES
Yes Sir--We'll get right at it.

DAVIS
Have they no artillery of their own?

WOOD
Doesn't appear so.

Suddenly as if on cue, a rushing whistle overhead--a sound that will become familiar in the 20th Century. The shell bursts right over them followed by another. Shrapnel rips into an artilleryman. Wood's horse collapses under him. Davis' hat is gone, his pant-leg ripped. More shells pour in--explode in the trees among the Rough Riders--there's screaming--more shells detonate over the battery.

GRIMES
Where are they?

WOOD
Can't see them--they're on the reverse slope.

A wall of explosions along the trees.

10TH CAVALRY--Leans up or stands to see what happened to the Rough Riders.

TREES--Pandemonium as shells arch over, landing far behind.

BARDSHAR
Surgeon! We need a surgeon!

O'NEIL
Get down! Move into the grass!
Crawl!

They do, he walks.

LUNA
Don't bunch--Keep down!

Kane and Tiffany move their guns up exposing themselves. The others pour into the long ditch or flatten in the tall grass. Roosevelt rides back and forth. Castillo rushes up to him.

CASTILLO
C Troop Sir--They took most of it.

ROOSEVELT
They seem to be ranging over us now.
How many casualties?

CASTILLO
A dozen or more Sir, maybe more.

CUT TO:

GERMAN ADVISOR--KETTLE HILL--He raises his hand, the Spaniards aim. He drops it. The Spanish Officer drops his--they fire in volley--work the bolts in unison, fire again.

MAXIM GUN--A German in pickelhelm starts firing--tapping the gun to traverse it.

10TH CAVALRY--A giant scythe of steel cuts through many. The rest hit the ground. Sheets of bullets tear up the dirt--whine over. Pershing is in the foreground, as low as the others.

ROUGH RIDERS--The same occurs here, but the men are in defilade, and the steel maelstrom has little effect other than to unnerve even the bravest. Twigs and shredded leaves fall from everywhere. Through all this walk the officers--Roosevelt rides--nothing hits him.

ROOSEVELT (to O'Neil)
Are we supposed to sit here and endure?

He knows there is no answer suitable.

CUT TO:

HOSPITAL--REAR AREA--Nash opens the flap of his tent. The pounding of artillery is much closer, the detonation of shells quite distinct. A crescendo of rifle fire comes in waves mixed with the chatter of machine guns. Nash is scared by the violence of it all.

VOICE (O.S.)
Take him out of here.

He turns and sees several men lifting the body of Neville from his tent cot across the way.

NASH
What's wrong? Leave him be.

ORDERLY
He's dead--What's it to you?

NASH (to himself)
He's my compadre.

He sinks back down, incredibly depressed. He looks over at the Buffalo Soldier.

BUFFALO SOLDIER
Them shells is gettin' closer. Must be hell up there. They always puts

the Cavalry in the front.

NASH
They do don't they.

He looks at the man--looks around the tent.

NASH (CONT'D)
What're we gonna' do?

BUFFALO SOLDIER
I don't know.

NASH
Throw me that boot.

BUFFALO SOLDIER
What the hell!

He throws him the boot.

CUT TO:

BOOTS--One is wrapped with a leather belt--the walk is a limp but determined. Nash and the Buffalo Soldier stagger through the mud--past the 71st New York marching band that has been shot to hell--laying by the side of the road--perforated tubas, drums, blood speckled trombones, moaning screaming men--the dead men lie face up or down in the mud--a direct hit from a volley or barrage. The trail ahead is crowded with men--sheets of bullets rip over though the trees. The balloon towers overhead.

BUFFALO SOLDIER
What is that thing?

NASH
A target--

CUT TO:

SHAFTER'S HEADQUARTERS--EL POSO HILL--Shafter and his staff watch the smoke--the intensity of the barrage is increasing even from where they are. A CAPTAIN reports.

CAPTAIN
General Shafter Sir--General Lawton wishes to report that the attack on El Caney has been met with heavy resistance.

SHAFTER
Then have him continue the assault--Caney must be taken regardless of cost!

COLONEL

The enemy guns make no smoke--we can't see their positions and they have the high ground.

GENERAL

You'll have to order Kent and Young's Division to assault the heights without flanking support from Lawton.

Shafter does not want to hear any of this. It is the Civil War all over again.

SHAFTER

God help us--God help us--They're pouring it down on those boys--How soon can they be deployed?

GENERAL

The question is CAN they be deployed. One Colonel is already dead--units are mixed up--

SHAFTER

Have what units that are able, make the assault.

GENERAL

Now, without further artillery support?

SHAFTER

Now.

He is sweating profusely and racked with guilt.

CUT TO:

WADSWORTH--ELI--INDIAN BOB--KLAUS--Laying on the ditch bank, flat as they can be. A dead mule is in front of them--bullets whip over with such frequency and in such numbers that it is almost a continuous noise. Trees behind shed twigs and leaves. Dirt kicks up everywhere. Down the line, a man yelps and shakes, having been drilled from end to end. Another just gets up, moves--and lays down to die.

INDIAN BOB

What're you thinkin' `bout Craig?

WADSWORTH

My father. He gave me some advice before I joined the regiment.

INDIAN BOB
Was it good advice?

WADSWORTH
Yes.

INDIAN BOB
You follow it?

WADSWORTH (smiling)
No--What were you thinking about in
all of this?

INDIAN BOB
Naked women.

CUT TO:

ROOSEVELT--PERSHING--Dismounted in the trees--shells burst
nearby--a fragment hits Roosevelt in the wrist.

ROOSEVELT
--Ahhhh I-I--like a hornet sting!

PERSHING
Is it bleeding Colonel?

ROOSEVELT
No--made a lump though. They'll have
to do better than that.

A bullet rips through the tree.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
We can't just stay here like this and
take it. I've lost more men already
than I did at Las Guasimas. We've got
to know what's going on.

PERSHING
One never knows Sir.

ROOSEVELT
Well--I'm not putting up with it.
Orderly!

His ORDERLY, a stout Oklahoma cowboy, rushes up.

ORDERLY
Sir.

ROOSEVELT
Take my horse--and ride back to the
Division Headquarters--at the river--

Tell them we're taking hell here
from these heights. If we don't
attack soon--there will be nobody to
make an attack! That clear!

ORDERLY
Yes Sir--Nobody to make an attack.
Yes Sir--Get it.

He turns up to go to the horse, and is punctured cleanly by a bullet.

ORDERLY (CONT'D)
Oh--Oh my God.

He falls across Roosevelt, shot through the heart. Roosevelt is speechless.

PERSHING
I'll go.

Before Roosevelt can answer--Pershing is up and mounts his horse at the run--wheels it about and gallops back into the trees. Roosevelt looks down the line to a black trooper, who watches him go.

ROOSEVELT
He'll be back. He's getting permission
for us to attack.

The trooper doesn't seem to think the prospect is as exciting as Roosevelt does.

CUT TO:

WHEELER'S TENT--A shell bursts in the trees--mules stampede. Wheeler's son tries to hold the animals. People rush about in confusion. Wheeler pushes the tent flap back--he looks tired, sweaty, and out of his mind. But he hears the sound of the guns. He pulls up his pants--gets into his suspenders and coat sloppily. He picks up a cavalry saber.

WHEELER
To horse!

WILLIAM WHEELER
Father!

WHEELER
To horse, God dammit!

His son grabs the reins--pulls the animals around.

CUT TO:

NASH--BUFFALO SOLDIER--They come to a river-crossing, forever to be known as Bloody Ford. Here lie piles of bodies, many still writhing. The balloon is caught in the trees, deflating. On both banks are wounded and dying. Medical orderlies and surgeons mark those who can be saved by painting on their coats with white wash. The river actually is tinged with red--bodies lay in the water. Nash and his companion limp across as best they can. Splashing up on the other side, they see a strange sight: Frederick Remington and the Vitagraph crew recording the debacle. Remington sits in a chair--an easel in front of him, as if he were in the south of France.

NASH
Where's the Cavalry?

REMINGTON
Hell, I wouldn't know, I'm a non-combatant.

A piece of burning tree whips over him. The balloon collapses—some men cheer, others moan.

VITAGRAPH MAN 1
Get the fellow getting out.

VITAGRAPH MAN 2
No--look at this.

VOICE
Clear the way! Clear the way, you son's of bitches!

A horse drawn carriage comes crashing through the water dragging Parker's Gatling Gun and limber. Parker is mounted on the lead horse whipping at it with a pistol and cursing everyone. His men run after him.

REMINGTON
You might follow him. He seems to know what he's up to.

CUT TO:

MARSHALL--Leaning against a tree--writing frantically. Before him, the troopers of the 10th fire their carbines back up the hill. Suddenly he's hit solidly through the stomach. His pencil and pad fly out of his hands, he stumbles--gasps and falls over backwards. He lays there breathing hard.

CUT TO:

NASH--BUFFALO SOLDIER--Moving through the trees--bullets snapping over them.

BUFFALO SOLDIER
I sees 'em--I sees my guidon!

He points.

BUFFALO SOLDIER (CONT'D)
There--there's your white cavalry to the left!

They turn to each other.

NASH
Goodbye my friend--I hope you live to be an old codger!

They embrace.

BUFFALO SOLDIER
Good luck Arizona! Good luck! We done the right thing?

They break apart.

NASH
Maybe not!

They go towards their units.

NASH--Running and skipping past men crouched or laying down.

ROUGH RIDER
Get down you idiot!

NASH
G Troop! Where's G Troop?

OTHER ROUGH RIDER
You're drawing fire!

STILL ANOTHER
Dumb ass--Keep going!

Nash is laughing at the absurd nature of this. He runs, skips, men curse him, yell him on--cheer. He doesn't care. The bullets zip by and he doesn't care. He just wants to find his buddies.

VOICE (O.S)
It's Nash!

OTHER VOICE (O.S.)
C'mon Nash!

He dives into the ditch and is pulled down by Goodrich and Castillo.

GOODRICH
You're mad Nash.

NASH
Ain't I!

CASTILLO
Where'd you come from?

NASH
Hospital--near the beach. You got
a carbine?

OTHER RIDER
Take Lowell's, he won't need it.

He hands it to him, and a belt of ammunition. He straps it on, feeling ten feet high and ready to wrestle gators.

KLAUS
Can you run on that foot?

NASH
I can run up this hill.

He checks the rifle and looks up. Standing over him--exposed to fire, is Bucky O'Neil, glaring down at him.

O'NEIL
I know what you did the other day
Nash! What'd you come back for?

NASH
For you Sir--and them. I got lonely--
thought maybe--

O'NEIL
Maybe what?

NASH
Maybe I could do some good. Maybe
I could be of some use.

O'NEIL
You'll never be of any use. Is
that weapon loaded?

NASH
Yes Sir.

O'NEIL
Then point it at them, not me.

He walks a step or two further.

O'NEIL (CONT')
Keep your muzzle clear of dirt--
Have your reloads in your pouch--

WADSWORTH
Sir--You better get down!

ELI
They can hit you Sir!

O'NEIL
There ain't a Spanish bullet made
that can kill me.

He turns back to Nash--smiles.

O'NEIL (CONT'D)
Nash--

He is hit straight through the mouth, blood spattering over Wadsworth. O'Neil's hat tumbles from his head and he falls like a heap--lays there in front of them.

INDIAN BOB
Cap'n.

NASH
I'm sorry Sir--

He gets out of the ditch and retrieves O'Neil's body--pulling it back to cover.

NASH (CONT'D) (to himself)
I'll tell your wife Sir--and your
children--I'll make sure everyone
remembers you and what you did for
us.

He is surrounded by the others. He straightens O'Neil's shirt--brushes his hair from his eyes--lays his hands over his chest.

NASH (CONT'D)
I'll build a statue if I have to.

Bardshar steps over to him--carbine in hand.

BARDSHAR
I'll be your orderly Sir.

ROOSEVELT
Then stay at my side.

GUIDONS--UNFURLED--1st Volunteer Cavalry--9th Regular Cavalry(Buffalo Soldiers)--and most of all--the Stars and Stripes.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
Bugler--Sound the advance!

CUT TO:

MARSHALL--Laying there, staring up at the sky. He sees Crane looking down at him.

CRANE
Having some hard luck old man?

MARSHALL
Yes Crane--I'm afraid I'm done for.

CRANE
Is there anything I can do for you?

MARSHALL
Well, you might file my dispatches.
I don't mean ahead of yours, but just file them when you can.

CRANE
I'll be happy to--

MARSHALL
I was holding a notebook--

Crane looks around--bullets zip by, shells burst behind him. He picks up the notebook.

CRANE
I've got it--Let me help you up.

He leans down.

MARSHALL
No-no--I'm shot through the spine and not in any real pain except when I move.

VOICE (O.S.)
Spread out! Five yard intervals.
Load!

MARSHALL
What's happening Crane--Stay here
and tell me, if it's no trouble.

CRANE
No trouble at all.

CUT TO:

ROOSEVELT--Riding behind the line of men at the ditch.

ROOSEVELT
Keep your intervals! Sergeants put
them into assault sections--We'll go
forward by rushes!

He jumps over the ditch.

CASTILLO
You heard the Colonel--Break into
sections.

He looks at our boys in G Troop.

CASTILLO (CONT'D)
Wadsworth--You're acting Sergeant--
1st Section.

WADSWORTH
Yes Sir!

CASTILLO
Nash--You're acting Corporal--Take
Klaus and Bob and Eli--2nd Section.

NASH
Sir!

He moves down the line. Bardshar jumps over the ditch, runs
to Roosevelt, who is wheeling his horse in the open.

ROOSEVELT
Come on! Follow me! At the walk!

DITCH--TREES--As one, the regiment gets up, surges forward--
walking, crouched low.

ROOSEVELT--Riding across the line, zigzagging through, always
moving forward. A man buckles and falls behind him.

ROOSEVELT
You're bunching up! Don't make
it easy for them!

He comes to a CAPTAIN of Regular Infantry, who have dug in between them and the Buffalo Soldiers. The men are laying down. The Captain looks up at Roosevelt.

ROOSEVELT
Get up man--We're taking the hill!

CAPTAIN
I've been ordered to stay here Sir.

ROOSEVELT
Where's your Colonel?

CAPTAIN
Dead Sir--blown in half!

ROOSEVELT
Then I'm the ranking officer and I
order you to charge or get out of
the way!

The Infantry gets out of the way.

PERSHING--Seeing Roosevelt move up, draws his Colt from its holster. He looks down the line of black faces.

PERSHING
This is what they pay you 13 dollars
a month for!

A cheer responds.

PERSHING (CONT'D)
We gonna' let them beat us up that hill?

BUFFALO SOLDIERS
No Sir!

PERSHING
Stand up and tell me!

They do--he advances.

ROOSEVELT--In the open now--beyond the trees--no cover at all--bullets kick up dirt--the men fire back and move in bounding overwatch.

ROOSEVELT
C'mon--Keep it up.

He leans down to Bardshar.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
Sergeant--Advance the Colors.

BARDSHAR
Advance the Colors!

GUIDON--FLAG--Whipping in the breeze--a tear in the flag already. Two big Rough Riders run past the others--bearing the flags up to Roosevelt.

CUT TO:

DAVIS--Standing with Wood and a group of foreign military observers.

DAVIS
I've just heard that a general advance is to be ordered.

WOOD
It seems the order is being carried out already Mr. Davis.

DAVIS
--But they are so--few. Has someone blundered?

WOOD
I hope not--
(to orderly)
Have Kent's Division notified to support. Send the rest of the 10th Cavalry--

CUT TO:

TREES--LIEUTENANT PARKER--Screams at his men to turn the guns around--set them. Men rush about--horses are let go and gallop wildly off. Shells burst overhead.

PARKER
Get a move on!

He wields a bullwhip.

PARKER (CONT'D)
Brave men are dying!

CUT TO:

ROOSEVELT--Turns back to his men--a bullet creases his ear and takes off his glasses in a shower of glass and frame fragments.

ROOSEVELT

Damn!

He pulls another from his hat, where they are loosely sewed on.

ROOSEVELT

Step it up!

CLOSE WADSWORTH--With his section, they come to the first barbed wire entanglement at the bottom of the hill. The Buffalo Soldiers rush ahead, throw themselves on the wire--Rough Riders go to cutting it. Men walk over the backs of others--only to discover a hidden trench on the other side. Spaniards shoot up at them--a brief hand to hand fight ensues. Roosevelt jumps over the wire--shoots a Spaniard in the face with his pistol. Wadsworth blasts a man from point blank--another comes up and grabs Tiffany who stabs him with his gilded Bowie knife and then cuts his throat. Goodrich and Nash shoot down the line catching some Spaniards in a crossfire with the Buffalo Soldiers. A Spaniard throws up his rifle, steps out.

SPANIARD

Amigo! Amigo!

Nash shoots him in the throat--but even as this is happening, the line is moving past--over the wire--up the hill. Kane is with his men dragging the guns. Goodrich pauses next to Wadsworth.

GOODRICH (winded)

"He that hath no stomach for this fight--
Let him depart."

He raises, aims and fires--Wadsworth pushes his men through the wire.

WADSWORTH

"Old men--forget--He'll remember--
What feats he did that day."

He lunges forward.

ROOSEVELT

Come on boys--Charge!

INDIAN BOB--Let's out a Sioux war whoop! The others let out rebel yells, screams--a roar as they start up!

CUT TO:

CRANE--Standing upright--his binoculars at his side.

CRANE

Now our men are going--going up the hill--advancing into the teeth of steel, lead and fire--God, listen to them yell!

He yells--Marshall even yells--and coughs.

CRANE (CONT'D)

Any American would give an arm to see this!

CUT TO:

KETTLE HILL--GERMAN ADVISOR--He indicates to the Spaniards to depress the Maxim Gun. They do, but the crest of the hill puts the leading Rough Riders below it. He indicates to move it forward.

GERMAN

Schnell! Schnell!

CUT TO:

PARKER'S BATTERY--Long magazines of .45-70 rounds are slapped into place. The guns are turned toward Kettle Hill--traversed, elevated.

PARKER

Fire!

A HAND--Turning the crank--the six barrels turning--flames blasting out the bottom--

MAXIM GUN CREW--They manhandle the weapon over the edge--Rough Riders fire, taking one out--but now the pounding rhythm of the Gatlings are heard--dust and rocks fly--bullets whine and thud--the Maxim crew is lost in dust and violence.

CUT TO:

NASH--Screaming at the top of his lungs as the Gatling fire comes over.

NASH

Come on boys!

He fires--reloads on the run. Roosevelt goes past always urging men on. Pershing's horse goes down in the foreground. The redoubtable Lieutenant keeps going, firing his revolver. The troops are mixed Buffalo Soldiers and Rough Riders, the whole melting pot charging up into Mauser fire. Men grab

their faces, arms, crotches and fall back screaming or make no sound at all.

CUT TO:

EL POSO HILL--SHAFTER--He has stood up--walked forward. His aides and staff are speechless.

COLONEL

They haven't a chance. The 10th and the 71st New York are held up on San Juan!

SHAFTER

They're still going up--they haven't stopped--

CUT TO:

FOREIGN OBSERVERS--DAVIS--They too seem to move forward.

BRITISH

Why they can't take it, you know.
It's slaughter--absolute slaughter.

FRENCH

Very gallant though--

A Japanese Observer just shrugs.

CUT TO:

ROOSEVELT--Nearing the crest--another line of barbed wire. His horse gets tangled in it, can't jump over. He gets off and lets "Little Texas" go--a bullet creases his elbow, tearing open his shirt. Three Spaniards jump up and raise their rifles. Bardshar drills two of them cleanly with his carbine, working the bolt like a machine. The third one drops his gun and runs back over the crest.

CUT TO:

WOOD--Advancing on San Juan Hill with the infantry and 10th Cavalry. Heavy fire tears into them, men go down in groups--machine gun bursts stitch the ground. The attack slows, wavering as the infantry drops down and shoots back. Many are armed with black powder Springfields issuing forth great walls of smoke through which the Mauser bullets rip.

CUT TO:

CRANE--Kneeling next to Marshall.

CRANE
Are you feeling any better old chum?

MARSHALL
Yes, I'm glad you were here Crane.
It is a great day even if it's my
last.

CRANE
Mustn't speak of that--Look they're
almost at the top--rising steadily
like a tide. I can hardly believe
it possible--I can see men silhouetted
against the sky now. I can see the flag.

CUT TO:

THE FLAG--Wavering in the hands of the Color Sergeant, shot
through the lungs. Lieutenant Castillo takes it from him and
goes over. He confronts Spaniards trying to turn the other
Maxim Gun around. A Buffalo Soldier stands upright firing
his rifle like at a range--two-three men blown down. A
Spaniard shoots Castillo through the leg, breaking it so that
he spins to one knee, holding onto the flag. The soldier
rushes him and thrusts his bayonet through his side.
Castillo beats the man with his pistol and shoots him. He
sees Roosevelt and Bardshar go over the top. A Spaniard
lines on Roosevelt--Castillo steadies and drops him.

ROOSEVELT--Stands atop Kettle Hill--the Spanish defenders are
running down the other side across the saddle to San Juan
Hill, where the largest blockhouse is. Rough Riders fire on
them.

ROOSEVELT
Form a line men--bring fire to bear on
the other hill! Form a line--

CASTILLO
You heard him--Form ranks--Prepare to
volley fire.

WADWORTH--NASH--Stop at the Maxim gun--its crew riddled by
the Gatlings which are now firing at San Juan.

WADSWORTH
This gun is still operable--

NASH
You mean it'll work--Well who knows
how to work it?

WADSWORTH
He does--

The German Advisor, wounded, sits with his hands in the air.

GERMAN ADVISOR
Kammarad! Kammarad!

NASH
I'm gonna' kill the son of a bitch!

WADSWORTH
No--Help me.

He pulls one of the dead Spanish away. Suddenly two huge hands grab the tripod and water jacket--Klaus. He is wounded in the hip and shoulder, but picks up the whole gun and turns it around.

WADSWORTH
Over here! Bring the Hun.

Nash shoves his rifle in the German's ribs and prods him across.

KANE--TIFFANY--Help pull the two Colts up and turn them towards the other hill. Castillo stands the whole time yelling orders and leaning on the flag.

THE MAXIM GUN--Is aimed at the Spanish trenchline, already under heavy fire from Parker's Gatlings--bullets start to rip through the Kettle Hill blockhouse. A man gasps and sits down and falls over. Roosevelt is directing the Rough Riders fire from off to the right. Wadsworth sits down behind the gun. Indian Bob holds a fresh ammo box--pulling out the belt. Klaus has the German by the neck.

WADSWORTH
What now?

Klaus speaks quickly and harshly in German, the man responds.

KLAUS
Open the feed cover!

They exchange again.

KLAUS
Lay the belt in--Engage the feed pawl--
Retract the bolt--Again. Yes that is
good. Now Bob--Hold the belt out so
that it does not--

Wadsworth fires a long burst--Bob feeds--Nash watches in astonishment.

SAN JUAN HILL--The Maxim fire rakes the trenches--straw hats fly--men scramble and fall.

CLOSE WADSWORTH--Blazing away.

WADSWORTH

"For he that sheds his blood with me
shall be my brother--Gentlemen in England
shall think themselves accurst they were
not here."

CLOSE TIFFANY--Behind the Colt that joins in on the
fusillade--Kane fires next to him--raking the Spanish
position.

TIFFANY (yelling)

"We few, we happy few--We band of
brothers--"

KANE (yelling)

"That fought with us on Saint Crispin's
Day!"

INDIAN BOB--Listening between aimed shots.

INDIAN BOB

What the hell are they talking about?

NASH

They're educated men.

WOOD--The infantry et al, charge forward now that the fire is suppressed--cheering, howling--and forward go the guidons and flags, one huge black trooper holding two of them. The tide surges up San Juan Hill.

ROOSEVELT--Seeing the effect and the Americans drawing close to the top.

ROOSEVELT

Cease fire! Damn it! Cease fire!

He was reloading his pistol--raises it and fires--no one hears.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

Wadsworth! Kane!

They finally stop.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

Will you kindly cease and desist!
You'll endanger our infantry!

He sees the charge go over the crest.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
Come on boys--Let's do it again!

He waves his pistol, and with Bardshar and about four others, goes over the crest, down towards the other hill.

YOUNG ROUGH RIDER
For God's sake follow the Colonel!

He is shot through the head as he finishes saying this.

ROOSEVELT--Down in the saddle--stops--bullets kick up dirt around him--a man grabs his chest and pitches forward. Roosevelt turns around--sees no one has followed him.

ROOSEVELT
What! Have you all turned coward!?

Goodrich looks over.

GOODRICH
The Colonel!

Others look over.

ROOSEVELT
What're you doing? You want me to go alone?

GOODRICH
We didn't hear you Sir.

OTHER ROUGH RIDER
Honest we didn't Colonel.

STILL ANOTHER
C'mon boys!

INDIAN BOB
Sorry Colonel--

The whole regiment seems to come over the edge at once—screaming--whooping--charging. Roosevelt turns and runs ahead--his pistol waving, screaming like the rest.

SPANISH TRENCHES--SAN JUAN HILL--The Rough Riders take the Spanish in the flank--blasting--stabbing. Goodrich and Eli club men down with their butts. Bardshar shoots another brace of riflemen, brains another with his barrel. Nash shoots men point-blank with his pistol until it is empty--then leaps into a trench with his knife. He comes out with a Mauser and proceeds to shoot at the retreating Spanish.

ROOSEVELT--Finds himself alone on the far side of the blockhouse. A Spanish Officer shoots at him--splattering stucco and brick frag that again covers his glasses. He goes down--fumbling on his hat. The Officer advances shooting--Roosevelt comes up--the two freeze and fire at once--the Officer turns, takes a few steps and rolls down the far bank. A BUFFALO SOLDIER SERGEANT, huge and ancient, puts his hand on Roosevelt's shoulder.

SERGEANT

It's alright Colonel. It's alright.

Roosevelt sits down.

ROOSEVELT

It'll never be the same.

NASH--His bloody knife in one hand--Mauser in another, stands helping the 10th Cavalrymen over the parapet. He reaches out and sees his friend from the hospital, they howl but we cannot hear them--they embrace and whirl around.

GOODRICH--KANE--ELI--Throw their hats in the air--cheering silently.

WOOD--Being congratulated by Pershing, smiling, laughing.

INDIAN BOB--Something hairy and bloody in his hand, smiles widely, arm in arm with William Tiffany.

WADSWORTH--KLAUS--Help the wounded Castillo, who still holds the waving flag. Bardshar joins them and they place it in the blockhouse. Its shadow catches Roosevelt's eye, and he sees it against the sky. Behind is a huge water tank with the word Empire on it. Roosevelt looks at it in quiet contemplation. He stands up, Wheeler is there standing behind him--takes his hand as does Wood--

CUT TO:

CRANE--Standing and looking wistfully at the heights. Marshall still staring up into the sky.

CRANE

Don't worry old boy--I'll file your story--file it before my own. You certainly deserve that--

MARSHALL

I'm very grateful.

CRANE

You're also damned brave, old boy.

Have the medicals seen to you yet?

MARSHALL

Yes, just before you came along.
Said I was paralyzed. Gave me about
a week or two.

CRANE

You never know--Did they give you
enough morphine?

MARSHALL

Yes, I have hardly any pain at all.

CRANE

Damn fine, that morphine.

A shadow comes over them. They look up--an imperious
equestrian figure--Hearst. Remington is on another horse
with his paints and equipment on a pack mule. Hearst has two
pistols in his sash--his shirtsleeves rolled up; and a Rough
Rider bandanna around his head. He looks like a pirate.

CRANE

Well hello Mr. Hearst.

HEARST

Crane--What happened to him?

CRANE

Shot through the spine Sir--paralyzed
I'm afraid.

Hearst gets off his horse--pushes Crane aside with a glance.

HEARST

I'm sorry for your misfortune Marshall.

MARSHALL

Many have already paid a stiffer price.

HEARST

I shall see that you get the finest
medical care that money can provide.

MARSHALL

Thank you Sir.

Hearst turns to his lackeys, who are not mounted.

HEARST

Take him to the beach and then to
my yacht--Have my surgeons notified
immediately.

They come in and surround Marshall--Crane watches from afar. Hearst gets back on his horse with surprising agility.

HEARST (CONT'D)
 You'll be happy to know, Marshall,
 that we shall beat every other paper
 to this story. Thank you for your
 sacrifice and valor.

MARSHALL
 An honor Sir.

Hearst turns and rides up the hill.

CUT TO:

ROOSEVELT--On the American side of the heights--the regular infantry and cavalry are digging in on the other side. Spanish sniper bullets still whizz over. An occasional shell is heard. American fire is returned. As Roosevelt walks down the safe slope, out of exposure, he is surrounded by Rough Riders, his boys. He has been crying to himself, his face stained with tears.

BARDSHAR
 Them colored boys sure know how
 to fight.

WADSWORTH
 They can drink out of my canteen
 any day.

NASH
 Can't say the same for some of them
 regulars. Then again they wasn't
 trained like us.

GOODRICH
 Colonel, are you alright?

INDIAN BOB
 Are you hit Colonel?

ROOSEVELT
 I'm alright--We've lost a good many
 friends.

He looks around--everyone crowds in.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
 I'm dreadfully sorry for calling you
 cowards there. I was mistaken--Please
 do forgive me, my friends--There are

no cowards here.

He sees something.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
Davis?

Davis is walking up--the Vitagraph boys with him.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
Take a picture Davis--Of us, our regiment
on this glorious hill. It will be with
us forever more.

DISSOLVE TO:

DAWN--WHITE HOUSE--McKinley's sitting room. Tea is served.
McKinley comes out in a bathrobe. Hay is seated.

MCKINLEY
Go ahead Mr. Hay--Give it to me.

HAY
After a battle of many hours, the
Army has taken San Juan Heights--
east of the city of Santiago, and
driven the Spanish into the retreat.
At this very moment a naval engagement
is proceeding with the Spanish fleet.

MCKINLEY
Our losses?

HAY
Costly but the price of victory is
always high.

MCKINLEY
Yes, I remember. But it is victory--
you think this damn thing can come
to an end?

HAY
Actually--they're in a bind. They've
got the high ground and the military
advantages, but supplies can't be moved
because of the rain, and yellow fever
has broken out.

MCKINLEY
Will the Spanish surrender?

HAY
It's a bluff--if it fails--Shafter

wants to fall back.

MCKINLEY
A disaster.

HAY
Precisely what Wheeler and Roosevelt
feel. It's a bluff.

MCKINLEY
Roosevelt--He's alive?

HAY
Very much so--the Hearst papers are
comparing him to Alexander the Great.
It seems he single handedly led a
charge that turned the tide. He
should've been dead many times over.
He has covered himself and his regiment
in glory.

McKinley gets up--goes to the window.

MCKINLEY
He will now be a dangerous man. We
must find some way to deal with that.
--At least Shafter is too fat to be
President.

CUT TO:

SURRENDER TREE--OUTSIDE SANTIAGO--A large oak tree--both
Armies observe from their trenches. The two parties are
approaching each other with appropriate pomp and ceremony--
drum rolls.

THE SPANISH--Resplendently dressed and quite dashing as could
be expected. The Commander, GENERAL TORAL, of course rides a
white horse. He stops under the tree and watches:

THE AMERICANS--Filthy, worn and somewhat sickly looking.
Shafter is uncomfortably on horseback, Wheeler and Lawton at
his side. American military prowess is displayed by an honor
guard of 10th Cavalry under Pershing. They stop. Toral gets
off his horse--removes his saber and walks toward Shafter--
comes to a heel clicking attention and waits--waits--looks
back at his INTERPRETER.

INTERPRETOR
Generalissimo Toral awaits General Shafter.

WHEELER
He can't get off his horse.

A moment of consternation. The Interpreter explains to Toral--who asks something in Spanish.

INTERPRETER

Why can he not get off his horse?

WHEELER

'Cause he can't get back on.

The interpreter goes and explains this to Toral, who is standing foolishly. He makes acknowledgment--smiles--hands the saber to his Interpreter and remounts his horse. Toral then takes the saber, rides up to Shafter and lays it ceremoniously across his arm. Shafter takes it. They shake hands--neither very happy about it.

WHEELER

The war is over boys.

DISSOLVE TO:

TRAIN STATION--SAN ANTONIO--Klaus stands alone on the platform as the train leaves, carrying his duffel bag, looking sharp in a clean uniform. As the steam clears, he sees his father, mother and all the little relatives, as well as a small German band. They rush to the huge man and surround him like he was a tree.

DISSOLVE TO:

HACIENDA--NEW MEXICO--A lone rider comes up and dismounts as the gates open. It is Castillo--his leg is stiff and will never work again. His girl rushes out to him and they kiss under the gate--his mother and sisters hug them and his brothers smile with admiration and envy. His father takes his hand--looks him in the eyes--weeps like a child and embraces him.

DISSOLVE TO:

BARDSHAR--Opening the door of his wife's restaurant, only to find it empty--he has medals on his chest. He sits down, shrugs his shoulders, and lights a cigar--thinking to himself in the long shadows.

DISSOLVE TO:

ELI--Eating a sumptuous meal in a New York City restaurant. Goodrich and Kane laugh while sumptuous professional ladies pour his wine and stroke his beard--light his cigar.

DISSOLVE TO:

PERSHING--Standing before a troop of the 10th Cavalry in their finest dress uniforms. He is having Captain's bars pinned on by General Leonard Wood.

DISSOLVE TO:

THEODORE ROOSEVELT--Rushing up the stairs of his New York townhouse--the door opens and Edith rushes out to kiss him passionately--his children run around the couple, pulling at them but unable to make them stop.

DISSOLVE TO:

TIFFANY BOWL--Gleaming in the soft light of Mrs. Fish's sitting room. The name William Tiffany can be made out. Wadsworth holds the bowl. He and Nash sit with a moist eyed Mrs. Fish.

MRS. FISH
How did Billy Tiffany die?

WADSWORTH
Yellow fever Ma'am.

MRS. FISH
Not in battle like my Hamilton?

WADSWORTH
No Ma'am.

MRS. FISH
Perhaps that alone is enough of a tragedy.

WADSWORTH
Your son's name will be honored forever Ma'am. He was the best we had.

MRS. FISH
That is small consolation Craig, but I thank you, for your compassion. And you Sir.

She turns to Nash.

MRS. FISH (CONT'D)
Where will you go now?

NASH
I have business out West Ma'am.

MRS. FISH
Are you a--Cowboy?

NASH
No Ma'am--I'm a Rough rider.
He smiles and we--

DISSOLVE TO:

TITLE: 1919

ARIZONA--The vast desert stretching away in the twilight. Henry Nash, twenty-one years older and well dressed, sits on a rock overlooking the spot where the money was buried. He has built a picket fence around it, and three marble gravestones are placed there--sort of monuments. They are to Neville, Irvine, and Bucky O'Neil.

NASH
I haven't seen you boys since the First World War ended. We licked the Kaiser soundly. I saw Theodore at his home in Oyster Bay--he's not in good health. Damn, he was the finest President we've ever have. Lost a son in the war. He told me something you ought to like. He said we turned the page of history.

He gets up--

NASH (CONT'D)
I'm doing fine--a millionaire now. I never forgot the start you gave me. My wife's fine and my oldest is off to Harvard. Pretty good for a man that shoulda' been hanged--Probably won't get out here next year--But I'll see you boys soon enough-- Adios Compadres.

He gets up and walks to a waiting touring car and the wind blows softly across the plains.

THE END